

Hoss makes first visit to Syria

DAMASCUS (AP) — Lebanese Prime Minister Salim Hoss arrived in Damascus Tuesday for his first visit to Syria since taking office last month. Hoss is expected to meet Syrian President Hafez Assad for talks on the Middle East peace process, the conflict in southern Lebanon and bilateral relations, Syrian officials said. Both countries have refused Israel's attempts to broker a separate peace treaty and maintain that any settlement must be based on the land-for-peace formula. Israel occupies the Golan Heights, a plateau in southwestern Syria. Israel also occupies a strip of south Lebanon which it maintains as a buffer against guerrilla incursions. There are almost daily clashes between Lebanese guerrillas and Israeli forces in and around the zone.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانكليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية الراي.

U.S. embassy in Cairo warns of possible attacks

CAIRO (AFP) — The U.S. embassy here warned Tuesday against possible attacks by "extremists" on U.S. targets in Egypt and urged Americans to be vigilant, maintain a low profile and treat unfamiliar mail with suspicion. "The U.S. embassy in Cairo has received reliable information that extremist elements may be planning imminent, unspecified attacks against U.S. interests in Egypt," it said in a message. "The embassy urges Americans to remain vigilant and take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness in order to reduce their vulnerability," the embassy said. It also urged U.S. nationals to "maintain a low profile, vary routes and times for all required travel and treat mail from unfamiliar sources with suspicion." The so-called "warden message" was posted on the embassy's web site on the Internet.

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King, Clinton discuss peace process, Iraq, bilateral ties

By Caroline Faraj

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein and U.S. President Bill Clinton discussed on Tuesday at a White House meeting the Middle East peace process, Iraq and the bilateral relations. The two leaders exchanged views on several issues in a very warm and substantial atmosphere, Jordanian Ambassador in Washington Marwan Muasher said, describing the half-an-hour meeting as a very "warm and substantial meeting."

Muasher told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview that the King and Clinton stressed the need for forging ahead with the implementation of the Wye River accord signed at the White House between Israel and the Palestinians in the presence of the two leaders. "The two leaders stressed the need for Wye accord to be implemented and to move forward and should not be (linked to) the Israeli elections," Muasher added. "On the Middle East peace process, the King and the president agreed it was imperative to implement the Wye accords as negotiated," said Leavy.

The land-for-security agreement negotiated at Maryland's Wye Plantation in October was put on hold last month when the Israeli cabinet made new demands of the Palestinians on security and political issues. New elections in Israel scheduled for May 17 have further clouded peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. The Oval Office talks between the King and the president also focused on the latest developments in the Iraq situation. "Jordan's position is clear vis-a-vis Iraq," Muasher said. "Jordan is facing economic difficulties generally, which are compounded by a closed Iraq market," he said. "The president discussed ways that the United States can provide assistance — what steps we could take to help the Jordanian economy grow in 1999."

discussed in-depth during Tuesday's meeting. "President Clinton showed understanding for the current economic situation, and promised that he'll do his best to help out," added Muasher. A U.S. official who asked not to be named told Reuters the two leaders discussed ways to aid Jordan's economy, hurt by the embargo against its neighbor, Iraq, but gave no details. "Jordan is facing economic difficulties generally, which are compounded by a closed Iraq market," he said. "The president discussed ways that the United States can provide assistance — what steps we could take to help the Jordanian economy grow in 1999."



His Majesty King Hussein and U.S. President Bill Clinton on Tuesday discuss at a White House meeting the Mideast peace process, Iraq and bilateral ties (Reuters photo)

At meeting with Dakhil, Prince Hassan renews call for resolving Arab conflicts

By Caroline Faraj

AMMAN — HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday received at Raghadan Palace Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Abdul Aziz Al Dakhil who delivered a message from Kuwaiti Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah on bilateral ties and regional developments. During the meeting, Dakhil conveyed greetings from Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah and Kuwait's Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah to His Majesty King Hussein and Prince Hassan, and offered his country's congratulations over the King's recovery.



HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, greets Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Abdul Aziz Al Dakhil at the Royal Court on Tuesday (Photo by Yusef Al 'Allan)

the need for concentrating on the human dimension in resolving conflicts and respect for the Arab people's rights to a free and dignified life. "We in Jordan have paid a heavy price for what happened in the region since the beginning of 1990s," the Crown Prince said. He called on Arab countries to understand Jordan's position and to remember that the Kingdom was on the forefront of defenders of the Arab Nation's causes and the Arab peoples' rights to live in security and stability.

The Regent stressed that the Arabs should resolve conflicts that could lead to the balkanisation of the region and its division into mini-states. "Rights and interests of various Arab states should be respected at all times when the Arab Nation is about to enter the 21st century," the Regent said. Dakhil reacted by saying that Kuwait highly appreciates Prince Hassan's call for building inter-Arab relations on solid bases and on respect for people and his repeated calls for the creation of a

mechanism to settle disputes among Arab countries. Iraq denies that it is holding any Kuwaiti prisoners and has recently accused Kuwait of holding 1,000 Iraqis. Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz last week criticised the Regent's speech for not condemning the U.S.-led strikes on his country and said that the Prince's call for "freedom, democracy and other human rights" for the Iraqi people was interference in internal Iraqi affairs.

U.S. fighters fire on Iraqi planes

Agencies

FOUR U.S. fighter jets fired missiles at Iraqi planes Tuesday in the "no-fly" zone over southern Iraq, a senior U.S. administration official said. It was the first American-Iraqi air-to-air confrontation in more than six years. The U.S. missiles apparently failed to hit the Iraqi planes, although one Iraqi plane was believed to have crashed, apparently after running out of fuel, the official said. The official Iraqi News Agency said Iraqi planes "confronted and clashed with the aggressive British and American aircraft" before "the aggressive aircraft withdrew. All of our air force planes returned to base safely."

The American planes — two Air Force F-15 strike aircraft and two Navy F-14 fighters — returned safely after the confrontation, the U.S. official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. The Navy planes were from the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson. The incident, which happened at about 2:30 a.m. EST (0930 GMT), marked an escalation of tensions between Iraq and the United States and Britain over enforcing the "no-fly" zones in northern and southern Iraq. Iraq considers the restrictions illegal and has vowed to defy them. President Bill Clinton has said U.S. and British forces will continue banning Iraqi flights in the restricted zones.

arguing that Saddam Hussein's military still represents a threat to minority Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south. "The president has made it clear we will enforce the no-fly zones vigorously. The Iraqi violations are at their own peril," David Leavy, spokesman for the White House National Security Council, said Tuesday. A senior Pentagon official said the air-to-air altercation was the first in Iraq since Dec. 27, 1992, when a U.S. F-16 shot down an Iraqi MiG-25. Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon said there were two separate incidents 15 minutes apart, one involving U.S. F-15s and Iraqi MiG-25s, the other U.S. F-14s and MiG-25s. U.S. warplanes fired a

total of six missiles during the two incidents. All told, military officials counted eight separate violations of the no-fly zone Tuesday involving 13 to 15 Iraqi aircraft. The Iraqi planes turned quickly after being fired upon, Bacon said. "They escaped without being shot down." At a Pentagon briefing, Bacon defended the accuracy of the missiles. "Air-to-air combat is an extremely engaging and demanding type of war," he said, adding there were still several unknowns, including the distance between the aircraft when the missiles were fired.

Israeli soldier injured in Hizbollah attack

MARJAYOUN (AP) — Lebanese guerrillas attacked Israeli troops outside a base in southern Lebanon on Tuesday, injuring one soldier, Lebanese security officials said. The officials said Israeli military helicopters flew to the scene shortly after the incident. They picked up the wounded soldier and strafed nearby ravines where the attackers may have fled. There was no immediate report of the incident from Israel. The Lebanese security officials said a remote-controlled bomb went off shortly before 9 p.m. (1900 GMT) on the road outside Beaufort, a Crusader-built

castle where the Israelis maintain a base. Guerrillas followed the bombing with rocket-propelled grenades and machine-gun fire that targeted a military vehicle, they added. They spoke on customary condition of anonymity. The strategic Beaufort, which overlooks areas of southern Lebanon and northern Israel, is about 6 kilometres northwest of Marjayoun, the main town in Israel's self-styled "security zone" in southern Lebanon. Beaufort is some 4 kilometres from the Israeli border. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the incident.

Israeli ministry accuses PNA of violating Wye

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's foreign ministry on Tuesday outlined what it called numerous Palestinian violations of the Wye River agreement in a bid to deflect international criticism of the Jewish state's freeze of the accord. In a memo intended for use by Israeli diplomats but released to the press, the ministry accused the Palestinians of failing to comply with the accord and reiterated Israel's insistence on certain conditions before handing over any further territory as called for in the agreement. "The Palestinian side has not taken the necessary measures to outlaw all organisations of a military, terrorist or violent character and their support structure," the memo said.

Palestinian lack of compliance on the collection of illegal weapons issue and the failure of the Palestinians to give Israel a list of its policemen. Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon is a hardline hawk who frequently criticised the peace process before joining the Israeli government just before the Wye agreement was signed in October. Israel froze the implementation of the Wye accord in mid-December when it insisted Arafat's Palestinian National Authority "renounce its intention to unilaterally declare an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital" and "halt violence and incitement to violence."

Israel to install security cameras to 'protect' Al Aqsa Mosque

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel will install cameras and other security equipment in the Al Aqsa Mosque compound to protect Islam's third holiest shrine, police said Tuesday. The detentions of 14 members of a Denver doomsday cult in two Jerusalem suburbs this week highlighted the need for extra security at Jerusalem's holy sites, said the spokeswoman, Linda Menuhin. Three members of the cult, the Concerned Christians, remained in detention Tuesday on suspicion they were planning violent acts in Jerusalem's walled Old City. One possible location cited

by a senior police source was the Al Aqsa Mosque compound, also known as the Temple Mount. Eleven other alleged cult members, including six children, have been ordered deported and have until Thursday to appeal. Tova Elinson, a spokeswoman for the interior ministry, said Israel has received a list of names of Concerned Christian members and alerted border officials not to let them into the country. The cult, led by 44-year-old Denver resident Monte Kim Miller, is not believed to have more than several dozen members. Miller is not in Israel,

police have said. Menuhin said the security cameras would be installed in the next few months in the Al Aqsa compound in the Old City. The Yediot Achronot daily said metal detectors would also be installed. Those trying to visit the Western Wall, which lines the mosque compound and is the last remnant of the Jewish Temple, already have to pass through metal detectors and have their bags searched. Menuhin said the new security measures have been in the works for a year and are to protect the site — perhaps the most sensitive in Jerusalem — from all possible

threats, not just those posed by Christian extremists. Muslim clerics said the security measures violated the autonomy that the Islamic Trust, or Waqf, has over the mosque compound, also known as Haram Al Sharif, or Noble Sanctuary. "Such an act is not acceptable to us," said the Waqf's director, Adnan Hussein. He accused police of using the publicity surrounding the Denver cult members as an excuse to install the security equipment. Israel is scrambling to prepare for the millennium celebrations in which over 4 million tourists, many of them

Christian pilgrims, are expected to participate. Police have created a special task force to deal with the possible threat posed by Christian extremists who may try to live out apocalyptic fantasies. Millennium researchers have pointed to various possible scenarios, including a mass suicide on the Mount of Olives, the site where some Christians believe Jesus will return to earth. According to another theory, fanatics might try to damage Al Aqsa to pave the way for rebuilding the Jewish Temple, considered by some a necessary condition for the Second Coming.

Some Christian leaders are worried that media coverage of extremists creates negative stereotypes about Christians. "We hope that the hype and hysteria among these fringe groups doesn't affect Israel's attitudes toward... the millions of peaceful Christians expected to come within the next two years," said David Parsons, a spokesman for the International Christian Embassy, a Christian group in Jerusalem. He said that the new security measures at the Al Aqsa compound were a responsible step.

It said the Palestinian side had failed to "comply with its security work plan and to engage in full bilateral security cooperation." The memo acknowledged Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's decree prohibiting incitement to violence but charged there had been "no implementation of the decree whatsoever." The document added that the Palestinian intention to declare an independent state in May with Jerusalem as its capital was a unilateral action prohibited by the Wye agreement. Other issues addressed in the ministry's guidelines were

'Sudan warlord defects back to government'

NAIROBI (R) — A Sudanese rebel leader has defected to the government for a second time and is trying to revive his militia in a move that could threaten famine relief in southwestern Sudan, rebels said on Tuesday.

A senior rebel leader said Kerubino Kwanyin Bol had defected from the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) just before Christmas and was preparing a return to his power base in the vast southwestern region of Bahr El Ghazal.

A Sudanese newspaper also reported on Monday that Kerubino was making overtures to the Khartoum government.

"Given his personality and unreliability it is no surprise that he is back with Khartoum," the rebel official, who declined to be named, told Reuters in Nairobi. "We understand that his mission is to get back to Bahr El Ghazal."

Kerubino was a founder of the SPLA but split in 1992

before making peace with Khartoum's Islamic government in 1997.

He rejoined the SPLA early last year, but months later fell out with rebel chief John Garang and was accused of ordering an attack on Garang's home in Nairobi, capital of Kenya.

Shifting allegiances among Sudan's warlords have complicated a 15-year civil war which pits the Islamic government in Khartoum against rebels who say they represent the mainly Christian or animist south.

Kerubino has his own militia in the north of Bahr El Ghazal and had always refused to bring it fully under the SPLA's command.

Aid workers say the militia's attacks on civilians directly contributed to a famine that killed thousands of people in the region last year.

They now fear Kerubino's latest change of allegiance could bring renewed instability to Bahr El Ghazal just as it

recovers from the famine.

The SPLA and Sudan's government agreed a ceasefire in Bahr El Ghazal last July but it is due to expire on January 15 and it is not clear if it will be renewed.

The United Nations' Operation Lifeline Sudan, which coordinates much of the aid work in Sudan, is pinning hopes for an improvement in the food situation in 1999 on a renewal of the ceasefire.

"Whatever stabilisation that has occurred in Bahr El Ghazal is dependent on the ceasefire and its extension," said Ted Chaiban, OLS deputy chief of operations for the southern sector.

He said Tom Vraalsen, the U.N. secretary general's special envoy for humanitarian affairs in Sudan, would travel to Khartoum on Thursday at the start of a tour aimed at negotiating an extension of the ceasefire.

The famine was caused by years of fighting which disrupted agricultural production and exacerbated a drought.

'Up to Turkey to get ready for EU'

BONN (R) — Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer on Tuesday reaffirmed German backing for Turkey's bid to join the European Union, but added that to secure entry it must fully respect democracy and human rights.

"For me, Turkey is a candidate," Fischer told a news briefing, departing from the position of former Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government, which was defeated in a general election last September. "But Turkey has domestic problems which it must resolve," he added.

Fischer said that Turkey would also have to clear tensions with Greece over the divided island of Cyprus before it stood a chance of winning unanimous acceptance to join the EU.

Fischer added that Bonn's centre-left government wanted to improve ties with Turkey, more than two million of whose citizens live in Germany. But he said criticism of Germany by Turkish politicians was making his job harder.

"Some of the things which have been said have been pretty hard to take when we have spent hours in EU talks backing the interests of Turkey," he said.

Ties between Bonn and Ankara were strained after Bonn dropped its bid to extradite Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan from Italy.

Ocalan was arrested last year in Italy because Germany had issued an arrest warrant in his name. German prosecutors suspect Ocalan of ordering the killing of a dissident member of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

But Bonn dropped its extradition bid, fearing that violence might break out between Turks and Kurds living in Germany.

Fischer said Ankara would have to abolish the death penalty if it was to have a chance of securing Ocalan's extradition from Italy. "It is a task for Turkey's constitutional structures to secure the preconditions," he said.



Iraqi women line-up as they wait for hours to buy chicken in Kadhimiya, main shopping center of Baghdad on Tuesday. Iraqi government distributes chicken or other necessary foods by monthly ration cards. The U.N.'s oil-for-food programme, launched in December 1996, allows Iraq to export limited quantities of oil to buy food, medicine and other necessities (AP photo)

Egypt talking to opposition group leaders, slams Saddam

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt has opened a dialogue with Iraqi dissidents who are trying to topple Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, an opposition group said Tuesday.

The move comes amid a war of words between Iraq and Egypt.

State-run Egyptian radio on Tuesday referred to Saddam as "a butcher" and "a destroyer" who is prepared to risk the lives of all Iraqis in order to stay in power.

"The leader of Iraq has to bear responsibility toward his people," the broadcast said. "Perhaps his hallucinations will be the beginning of the end to the worst ruler ever seen by Iraq and the Arab Nation."

Also Tuesday, Maad Abdul Rahim, a leader of the opposition Iraqi National Accord, said members of his group met Monday with Hani Riyadh, who is Egypt's ambassador to Jordan.

He did not give any details of the meeting but said his group was grateful to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak for "his stance in support of the Iraqi people."

Abdul Rahim said in a telephone interview from Amman that Mubarak's position "will give us huge moral support in our struggle to bring this regime down."

Egyptian officials con-

firmed that the meeting took place and said further meetings were planned with other Iraqi opposition groups. The officials spoke on condition their names not be used.

The Amman meeting marked the first time that Egypt has been in contact with the Iraqi president's opponents since the end of the 1991 Gulf War.

It reflects a major shift in Cairo's policies toward Iraq and could be a sign that Egypt supports U.S. efforts to work with Iraqi opposition groups seeking to overthrow Saddam.

Last month, Mubarak blamed Saddam for provoking the U.S.-British air strikes against Iraq, saying Saddam was "the reason for all the problems" in Iraq.

American and British jets fired missiles and rockets at Iraq from Dec. 16-19 to punish Saddam for his failure to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspectors.

Egypt's parliament announced Monday it would investigate the alleged killing by the Baghdad government of more than 5,500 Egyptian migrant workers in 1988.

The allegation was the latest salvo in charges and counter charges flying between Iraq and Egypt since Mubarak's remarks on Dec. 28.

Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz on Tuesday accused Mubarak of "cooking up more manoeuvres and conspiracies and probably another aggression" against Iraq.

"But Iraq will stay lofty... and it will be supported by all the Arab masses," Aziz wrote in an commentary in the state-run Al Jumhuriya newspaper.

In Egypt on Tuesday, an editorial in Al Massa newspaper accused Saddam of actions that have prompted the U.N. Security Council to continue trade sanctions on Iraq for eight years.

"He [Saddam] lives like a king or emperor and does not care about Iraqis who die from the sanctions, which he is eager to have continued," the paper said.

Musa wants information on deaths of Egyptians in Iraq

CAIRO (AFP) — Two members of the Egyptian parliament have asked the government to shed light on the mysterious deaths of nearly 5,600 Egyptians in Iraq shortly before the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, officials said Tuesday.

The MPs, from the ruling National Democratic Party and leftist opposition Tagammu party, called during Monday night's session for Prime Minister Kamal Al Ganzari and Foreign Minister Amr Musa to submit a report to parliament on the killings, which the weekly Akhbar Al Yom revealed Saturday.

"The people want to know the truth and the government can no longer remain silent about this tragedy," Tagammu MP Badri Fraghali said.

Parliament tasked the Arab affairs committee with studying the MPs' request and making recommendations. Akhbar Al Yom, quoting "a highly-placed source," said 5,596 Egyptians were slain by the Iraqi regime before the August 1990 invasion of neighbouring Kuwait.

The newspaper called for the government to lodge a complaint at the United Nations against Iraq for crimes against humanity.

A number of bodies of Egyptian workers were sent home from Iraq months before the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, but the circumstances of their deaths remained murky, as did the exact number of the dead at the time.

Turkish army watches over government search

By Alistair Bell
Reuters

ANKARA — Turkey's fractious political leaders were entangled on Tuesday in efforts to forge a new government under the watchful eye of the ascendant military.

Turkey has been without an established government for 40 days but, familiar with such uncertainty, shows no signs of major disruption. Inflation has fallen to its lowest level for eight years and Ankara scored a major diplomatic victory over regional rival Cyprus last week.

Nevertheless, the staunchly secularist generals have stepped up warnings that the power vacuum could aid the main opposition Islamists in the run up to general elections in April.

Prime Minister-designate Yalim Erez vowed not to heed calls to abandon his faltering bid to set up Turkey's sixth government since 1995.

"I am not considering giving back the mandate," Anatolian news agency quoted him as saying.

His search for partners in a proposed broad-based coalition ran into trouble on Monday after comments by conservative rival Tansu Ciller.

"Ciller Trips Him Up," the daily newspaper Yeni Yuzyl said. "Ankara Turned Upside Down," said another paper.

Radikal.

Ciller, a former prime minister, voiced support for an alternative bid to form a minority government under leftist Bulent Ecevit, jeopardising Erez's predictions that he would announce the make-up of his cabinet by Wednesday.

Whatever the new government looks like, it will only be a stop-gap measure until the polls in three months' time.

The armed forces, self-proclaimed guardians of Turkey's secular order, are keeping a close eye on the political wrangling for signs of backsliding in the fight against Muslim religious activism.

The force commanders on Monday issued a pointed statement urging the factions not to draw them into the political fray.

"The public is well aware that such initiatives are useless efforts at a time when our nation is most in need of stability and is urgently in need of a government," the general staff said.

The communiqué, despite its disavowal of any army role in the current deliberations, appeared designed by the generals to make their presence felt.

The army has been willingly involved in politics since it led a campaign to remove an Islamist-led government

from office in mid-1997.

A similar military warning last November has helped force the main Islamist Virtue Party to the margins of the government talks, despite being the main opposition party.

The Islamists narrowly won the last polls three years ago on the back of Turkey's economic woes and voter discontent at squabbling among secularist rivals. This time around, the economic outlook is slightly better. Data released last weekend showed annual inflation at 54 per cent, the lowest since 1990.

Istanbul stocks were up 0.16 per cent on Tuesday morning after jumping more than six per cent on Monday on the inflation figures and hopes that a new government was on the horizon.

Economists say, however, that strong government is needed for lasting success against inflation.

A new cabinet will also have to tackle long-standing disputes with neighbours Greece and Cyprus.

Turkey won a two-year standoff with Cyprus last week when the Greek Cypriot government scrapped plans to bring anti-aircraft missiles to the island.

NATO member Turkey had threatened to strike the Russian-made missiles if they were deployed.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 Cartoon — "The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin"
15:30 Children's Programme — Halfway to Cross the Galaxy and Turn Left

16:00 French Documentary
16:30 (Ch. 2 links with Ch.1)
17:00 French programme
18:15 Omar Ben Abdul Aziz
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Words of Wisdom
19:30 News headlines
19:35 Comedy — 2 Point 4 Children

20:00 Islam in a Changing World
20:30 Drama — NYPD Blue
21:15 The Great Moments of Science and Technology

21:30 Faces and Places
22:00 News in English
22:30 Cover Story
23:10 The Album Show
23:59 End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:55 Fajr
05:10 (Sunrise) Duha
11:41 Dhuhur
14:27 Asr
16:51 Maghreb
18:13 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366

Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811

St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751

Amman International Church Tel. 5865897

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932

St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440

Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138

Church of Presentation, Sweifeh Tel. 5920146

The Uniate Catholic Church Tel. 4624757

The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679

The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052

The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331

The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of scattered

showers particularly in the northern parts of the Kingdom and winds southeasterly light to moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman05/14
Aqaba11/22
Deserts04/16
Jordan Valley12/22

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 15, Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 35 per cent, Aqaba 37 per cent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun03/09
Jerash07/16
Um Qays06/15
Madaba03/13
Petra02/15
Dead Sea12/22

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Abdul Rahim Mustafa 4744685
Dr. Issam Asmar 4890504
Dr. Mohammad Shugair 4652693
Dr. Nidal As'ad 4751672

AMMAN:
Firas Pharmacy5661912

Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730
Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004
Ruko Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

IRBID:
Dr. Ali Shugairi02/7100669
Fou'ad Pharmacy02/275360

ZARQA:
Dr. Randa Shahin09/995710
Palestine Pharmacy09/983562

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade4671101
Blood Bank4775121
Highway Police5343402
Traffic police4896390
Public Security Dept. 4630321
Hotel Complaints5605800
Price Complaints5661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints 4897467
Amman Municipality Complaints4787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls0132
Central Amman Telephone Repairs4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs5661101
Jordan Television4773111
Radio Jordan4774111
Water Authority5680100
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Electric Power Co.4636381

RJ Flight Information 44-53300
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery5921199
The Islamic, Abdli5666131/7
Hussein Medical Centre5856856
Luzmila4630195
Khalidi Maternity4644281/6
Akileh Maternity4642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity4623662
Malhas, J. Amman4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani5607071
Stmeisani Hospital5607431
Jordan Hospital5607550
University Hospital5353444
Al-Muasher Hospital 5667227/9
Al-Ahli, Abdali5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4777101/3
Al-Bashir4775111/25
Army, Marka4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital5157100
Amal Hospital5607155
Al Amal Cancer Centre 5353000

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital09/983323
Zarqa National Hospital09/900560
Ibn Sina Hospital09/986731
Al Hikma Modern Hospital09/990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital02/275555
Roman Catholic Hospital

02/272725
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital02/7101372, 02/7103101
Rosary Sisters Hospital02/7102831, 02/7102011
Specialty Hospital02/7103100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital 03/201411

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700). Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:30 Damascus (RJ)
08:35 Jeddah (RJ)
08:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:55 Larnaca (RJ)
15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:25 London (RJ)
16:50 Istanbul (RJ)
17:05 Paris (RJ)
17:30 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
17:55 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)

18:20 Brussels, Berlin (RJ)
18:45 Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)
19:25 Rome (RJ)
23:10 Beirut (RJ)
23:59 Bahrain (RJ)
05:40 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights
09:30 Cairo (MS)
10:30 Jeddah (SV)
12:20 Colombo (KU)
13:10 Tunis (TU)
13:20 Bahrain (GF)
14:05 Rome (AZ)
15:05 Vienna (OS)
15:30 Algiers (AH)
18:05 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
18:40 Beirut (ME)
19:15 Frankfurt (LH)
00:55 London, Damascus (BA)
01:25 Athens (OA)
02:00 Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
09:30 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
10:10 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
16:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
18:30 Haifa (arriving at QAIA) (RW)

18:45 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
22:50 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES
06:50 Larnaca (RJ)
08:25 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

09:30 Aqaba, Rome (RJ)
11:30 Istanbul (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
16:30 Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)
19:30 Colombo (RJ)
19:35 Beirut (RJ)
20:15 Bahrain (RJ)
20:15 Bombay (RJ)
20:25 Cairo (RJ)
20:35 New Delhi (RJ)
20:35 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
21:00 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
21:15 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:45 Sana'a (RJ)
00:40 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights
06:30 Larnaca (CY)
07:25 Damascus, London (BA)
07:25 Paris (AF)
10:30 Cairo (MS)
12:00 Medina, Jeddah (SV)
13:20 Kuwait (GF)
14:10 Bahrain (GF)
14:10 Tunis (TU)
15:30 Vienna (OS)
15:30 Rome (AZ)
16:20 Sharjah (AH)
19:30 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)
00:35 Amsterdam (KL)
02:45 Athens (OA)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
07:00 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
16:00 Haifa (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
16:30 Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport) (RW)
20:30 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

Home

Christianity
Already or

The War

By Alison Buckholtz

What's

"Heat" at Books @ C
Jan. 7 at 10:30 p.m. Tel. 4Photo exhibition at I
Jan. 10Exhibition of ceram
work by Jordanian, Iraqi
artists at Hammourabi Art
Gallery, until Jan. 25.Exhibition of Nabat
weaving and Trade Centre, o
Tel. 5699141/2."The Warm Winter"
The Tenth Anniversary
of Artists at Darat Al F
463251/2, until Jan. 25.

Christianity classes already on offer

AMMAN (J.T.) — A senior official Tuesday refused reports that a decision to offer Christian education had been postponed, and said the Education Ministry has already started offering classes in accordance with an agreement reached last year with Jordan's Christian Bishops Council, refuting media reports that the decision was postponed.

The Ministry of Education Director General Mahmoud Massad said that Christian students in public schools of the Salt, Irbid, Huson, Ajloun and Madaba have been receiving Christian education since last year.

Hanna Jallouf of Terra College, the council's director of educational relations in the ministry, said Christian students in government schools will be required to attend education classes in their districts once a week. The classes will last 45 minutes, according to Jallouf, who noted that religious education will be compulsory for all Christian students.

The plan is a trial and will be introduced to all districts, including Amman, if it proves successful, added Jallouf.

The decision to include such education in government schools, which currently offer only Islamic education, was taken two years ago but implementation was delayed due to technicalities, he said.

Jallouf said the Christian curriculum is similar to the Syrian model since no appropriate texts are currently available. The books will be distributed free of charge.

The council has required a number of qualified Christian instructors to teach from the third to the secondary level, but the teachers will be paid by the ministry, according to Jallouf.

He said the council has provided the ministry with the names of the selected teachers and the schools at which classes will be held.

Jallouf expects a Jordanian syllabus to be ready in two years. A special committee has been created to prepare the programme.

PPD bans publication of information on case against Deputy Abbadi

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Department of Press and Publications Tuesday circulated a memorandum to the local press banning the publication of "information or news" connected with or relevant to Parliament Deputy Ahmad Oweidi Abbadi.

The department's director general Iyad Qattan said in the memorandum to the press "all information or news related to Deputy Ahmad Oweidi Abbadi will not be published and violators will be prosecuted under article 39 of the Press and Publications Law number eight of 1998."

The department acted in response to instructions from the prosecutor general of the criminal court who asked that the ban be observed by all newspapers.

Petra, the Jordan News Agency, first broke the news about Abbadi's alleged sexual assault case in late December. Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Hadi Majali was upset by the Petra report which claimed that he had received a written message from the prosecutor general requesting that Parliament lift Abbadi's immunity so that he can stand trial.

Majali, who said he had not received the prosecutor general's request, said he requested that Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh study the matter as it is the responsibility of the executive authority to deal with the situation.

Gas trucks' 'ugly' honking becomes music to the ears as distributors dispatch cylinders after gas shortage

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Jordanians who were inconvenienced by the recent gas crisis seem to be relieved to see vans carrying gas cylinders again roaming the capital's streets, honking their horns to alert citizens of their arrival to their neighbourhoods.

Others are less enthusiastic and believe the crisis could occur again at any time if scheduled gas shipments are delayed.

"The root solution to the gas problem in Jordan is to upgrade the production capacity of the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company's station as well as increasing the storage capacity of gas stations across the Kingdom," said Mohammad Kaisi, chairman of the Jordan Gas Stations Owners Association.

He blamed the Jordan Refinery Company for the crisis which, according to the union, is not the first since 1994.

However, the Jordan Consumer Protection Society said yesterday that it appreciated the efforts of the refinery and the Ministry of Energy to overcome the problem.

"The ordered gas has arrived in the Kingdom and the Ministry of Energy is supervising the distribution of gas in all parts of the country. There is no need to worry. The crisis is over," Mohammad Obeidat, head of the National Society for Consumer Protection said in an interview with the state-run Jordan news agency, Petra.

But, he warned of a possible subsequent shortage caused by citizens buying more than their actual need.

"People should rationalise buying gas and avoid stockpiling it in their houses," said Obeidat.

"The crisis has been over since last week, but people buy [gas cylinders] more than they need which has contributed to complicating the problem," Minister of Water, Irrigation and Supply Hani Mulki told the Jordan Times.

Abdul Wahab Zu'bi, general manager of the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company, attributed the problem to an unexpected delay of a gas shipment from Greece.

"The air strikes against Iraq also delayed an overdue gas shipment from Baghdad," said Zu'bi.

Some columnists, however, lashed out at the refinery for laxity in dealing with the problem.

"The cut of gas supplies from Iraq to the Kingdom caused by the four nights of American-led air strikes against Iraq should not have led to the crisis," said Fakhri Qu'war, a columnist. The company did not take the usual precautionary measures to prevent such a crisis.

Another columnist ruled out the possibility that citizens have any role in complicating the problem.

"I find it strange that some people lay the blame on citizens for buying more than their need," said Ahman Musleh. "It is only the government and the company who are responsible for the gas shortage."

Some people were amused to hear the gas vans disturbing their peaceful mornings again.

"The gas vans used to disturb us every morning but now I wait eagerly for that ugly noise," said Mohammad Ali from Sweileh suburb.

But he and others expressed fear that the crisis would occur again and that they will have to play the waiting game once more.

"First it was the water, now it is the gas. I wonder what would be next," asked Khalid Barawi, a school teacher.

In a related issue, Jordan and Iraq signed an oil agreement, earlier this week, under which Baghdad will supply Jordan this year with 4.8 million tonnes of crude oil and by-products. The deal stipulates that Jordan's needs of refined products would be one million tonnes and the rest would be crude oil.

The Washington Post discovers Petra

By Alison Buckholtz

At the entrance to the ancient city of Petra, bedouin cowboys rush past towering red mountains that have seen the rise and fall of civilisations. These men on horseback, their kaffiyahs billowing, are the only people who move quickly in this magnificent town in southwest Jordan. Visitors, stunned into silence by the ruins of Petra's Nabatean kingdom, navigate the city slowly, on foot. Their discussions about empires long gone are hushed, as if in church. Or as if someone being spoken of — a former governor of the destroyed capital, or a worker who helped to build it — could hear. Maybe they can.

The "rose-red city" of Petra, which flourished under Nabatean Arab rule from the 6th century B.C. until A.D. 106, is so pristinely preserved that it seems you'd need only round a corner to catch its former residents in conversation. In fact, Petra's overhanging cliffs and confined spaces create concert-hall acoustics, and often the "echoes of the past" are really just echoes of discussions held several feet ahead.

The past is present in Petra. After it was captured by the Romans in A.D. 106, it was ruled by Muslims (7th century) and later Crusaders (12th century). Petra's ruins were discovered by archaeologists in 1812. But, relatively speaking, these ruins are brand new. Nineteenth-century visitors were limited to explorers, archaeologists and intrepid English gentlemen of the sort usually encountered on the pages of Victorian novels.

Its proximity to Israel and Egypt, its people's easy grace (you'll hear "welcome, welcome" at every doorstep, restaurant and shop) and the natural wonders within its borders make it a memorable stop on a Mideast tour or as a resting place on the way to

countries farther afield.

Whether arriving from Jerusalem, Cairo, Amman or anywhere else, visitors enter Petra via a thoroughly democratic process. With the exception of the native "cowboys," all go into Petra on foot, through a single, narrow fissure known as the Siq. Upon emerging, the initial shock is just as universal: Carved entirely into sandstone and mountains and covering three miles of mystical, dusty land, Petra is a city that reveals its wonders as quickly as it hides its secrets.

Those secrets are locked in a series of buildings, temples, amphitheatres, monasteries, houses and roads glowing pink, red, orange or amber, depending on the height of the sun. The site is semi-arid, and the friable sandstone that yielded to the Nabateans' tools is tinted in shades found only in poetry. Carvings of animals and human forms line the Siq, some rubbed almost smooth by centuries of sand. But it is the approach to Petra's Treasury building that is truly astonishing.

The Treasury dominates Petra. Little wonder it starred in "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade": this building is as rich and mysterious as biblical history. Rich, yes, but not in riches. Inspired by classical Hellenistic architecture, the Treasury was created as a Nabatean king's tomb and also served as a temple. It stands more than 120 feet high, and its sharp angles, solid columns and ornate carvings are at odds with what we think of as desert architecture. It's easier to imagine such an imposing structure fashioned from marble, situated among palaces in Rhodes or Rome. Marble would certainly have repelled the scores of bullet holes that pockmark the Treasury's sandstone walls, evidence of raiders who thought their lost ark overflowed with gold. But if there ever were treasures in the Treas-

ury, nothing remains today.

Just paces beyond, the High Place of Sacrifice gives you room to ruminate. Few tourists thronging the Treasury hike this route. But the donkeys roaming the flat top of the mountain appreciate the company, and they're friendly enough to lick an outstretched hand — especially one offering an apple.

It's easy to spot the Royal Tombs from the High Place of Sacrifice, but this is one time the bird's-eye view just doesn't compare. The Royal Tombs, a series of large structures carved, like everything else in Petra, into rock face, stand as elaborate monuments to the city's former leaders. Smaller, more weather-beaten tombs alternate with the Royal Tombs, and in each case the whorls and colorings of the sandstone are as vivid as a kaleidoscope.

The heart of Petra is its former marketplace. Its veins are the paved, colonnaded Roman roads, and the amphitheatre, even today, beats with activity. Bedouin children beg for candy, money, T-shirts, baseball caps and anything else their hungry, roaming eyes light on. Groups of Japanese tourists demonstrate the finer points of chopstick use to their Jordanian guides. Concession stand owners hawk sodas in English, Hebrew and German, switching tongues with the linguistic dexterity of diplomats. (Hint: If you want a Coke, ask for cola. If you want a Pepsi, ask for Pepsi. And if you want water, make sure it's bottled.)

— The Washington Post

New IMF programme expected to propose clampdown on tax evasion

AMMAN (J.T.) — The 1999-2001 economic restructuring programme to be adopted by the government in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is expected to include an amendment to the existing income tax law in order to stem rampant tax evasion, according to a report in the Al Aswaq daily Tuesday.

The report said that the Income Tax Department has been collecting an average of JD150 million annually in income tax out of an estimated Gross National Product estimated at JD5.5 billion. This means that at least 50 per cent of Jordanians evade their income tax payment.

The report said that the Jordanian government will this month open negotiations with the IMF to agree on terms for financing the new economic restructuring programme. An IMF delegation due in Amman soon will open talks with senior Jordanian officials about the new three-year agreement and to conduct an assessment of the former 10-year economic restructuring programme which ends Jan. 31.

The talks will also include a revision of terms and conditions which the IMF is demanding that Jordan apply to qualify for loans and carry out the economic reform plan.

Judging from the preliminary discussions between the IMF and the Jordanian government, the new programme will aim to reduce the deficit in the country's annual fiscal budget gradually and to pursue the privatisation policy. The programme also calls for restructuring a number of sectors like water, agriculture, health, and higher education. Other aspects of the national economy, such as the foreign currency reserves of the Central Bank of Jordan, cooperation between the private and public sectors in economy-related affairs are likely to form part of the package. Reduction of the public administration sector and a performance upgrade in the sector are also expected to be included.

The report said that amendments to laws and regulations involved in the new economic reform plan are to be made in response to IMF recommendations in a manner that would help Jordan adapt to developments in the Middle East.

Pharmacists Association prepares to suspend 300 'due-dodging' members

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — The General Assembly of the Jordan Pharmacists Association has decided to suspend the membership of 300 members for failing to pay their fees, said Abdul Rahim Issa, head of the association.

"The names of the dismissed members will be published very soon in the public newspapers," said Issa.

The association last year repeatedly threatened to suspend the membership of 1,300 of its members in the West Bank and Jordan for failing to pay membership dues.

According to the association's figures, there are 5,000 names on the membership list of the association.

The general assembly gave dues-dodgers — 26 per cent of the association's total members — a grace period lasting until Dec. 31, 1998, before striking their names from the membership roster.

Talal Albo, secretary general of the association blamed the previous general assemblies for the large number of dodgers, saying that the assemblies were lax and indecisive, allowing members not to pay yet still retain their membership.

But members wonder whether membership, and the financial obligations it entails, is a worthwhile investment of time and money.

"We get nothing from the association to help us or voice out our concerns so why should we pay the fees," said one pharmacist who expects to be suspended.

"Besides, working in pharmacies is not as profitable as it was before due to the ever-increasing number of pharmacies in the Kingdom," said the pharmacist who did not wish to be named.

"There are around five pharmacies in my neighbourhood. How can I be expected to make money and pay my fees to the association?" he added.

Another pharmacist who works in a pharmaceuticals factory complained that his low pay does not allow him to "unnecessarily expenses."

"Factories work us to the bones and they do not pay us well," said Iyad Azmi. "We are always confronted with the same two options — take it or leave it."

According to the association's by-laws, whose members own 1,600 pharmacies and 12 drug factories, pharmacists who lose their membership are prohibited from practising their profession in the Kingdom.

"The association from now on will be strict in enforcing its rules on dues payment," said Albo.

The payments are fed into the Social Security Fund and the association's pension fund.

According to the association figures, the association is approximately JD100,000 in arrears to those two institutions as a result of the members' failure to pay up.

According to the by-laws, a member loses his her membership after failing to pay the required fees for six consecutive months and after receiving a written warning that he or she has been remiss in payment. A defaulting member also loses all the savings and pension funds he or she has accrued.

Ministry to launch pilot project to rehabilitate school dropouts

By Suba Ma'ayah

AMMAN — The government plans to launch a pilot project next month to help rehabilitate some of Jordan's school dropouts, estimated to form two per cent of 985,000 pupils at 2,750 state-run schools, officials said Tuesday.

Mahmoud Massad, director general of education at the Education Ministry, said a weekly camp, to open at a state-run school in the poverty-stricken Wihdat area, would be launched in other towns and cities later in the year.

A team of counsellors, teachers and psychologists will supervise 30 dropouts between the age of 12 and 16 years who will be allowed to attend the first project.

They will spend weekends at the camp for up to four years to undertake educational and rehabilitation programmes to primarily prevent them from turning into juvenile delinquents.

"The idea is to gather dropouts who are currently working in different underpaid jobs and have them spend several weekends in a specially-equipped camp at the school," Massad told the Jordan Times.

"They will receive a comprehensive educational scheme that includes learning programmes for illiterates, medical care, nutrition and other activities as well as psychological guidance in an attempt to rectify their negative behavioural attitudes and to boost their morale and skills at work," he added.

The ministry plans to set up 30 similar camps later this year in other poor areas in eastern Amman as well as in Zarqa, Irbid, Madaba, Karak and Aqaba — areas whose income basically comes from tourism or industry.

"These projects will help decrease illiteracy and also lessen tendencies of aggressive behaviour and vandalism caused by

teenage dropouts," Massad explained.

However, he and other officials said the long-term success and survival of the project hinged on the ability to secure more funding from government and non-governmental organisations.

The ministry's hands are tied as it spends millions of dinars from tight budget allocations and from foreign funding to modernise school curricula and improve the overall educational system.

The string of projects for the dropouts are estimated to cost JD8,000 a year.

But educators and sociologists believe the socio-economic benefits of such a scheme will be far greater.

Government officials say that 70 per cent of dropouts commit juvenile crimes and such a project could

help reduce the number.

Even though 91 per cent of children in Jordan attend schools between the ages of six and 16, thousands dropout because of poverty, broken families and disenchantment with the overall educational system.

This, sociologists and educators say, deprives thousands of children of their basic right to education and to future opportunities to a better quality of life.

Despite the ministry's efforts to tackle the problem of dropouts, independent educators suggest that teacher performance in most schools, especially public institutions, fall below international standards with a heavy reliance on rote learning and non-participatory methods.

Curricula still contain gender stereotyping and lack discussions on contemporary issues, they add.

These quality concerns have impacted negatively on student's learning achievements and the level of their interaction in the classroom.

The Editor and Staff of The Jordan Times mourn the passing of Saeeda Al Safadi, grandmother of their friend and former colleague Ayman Al Safadi May her soul rest in peace

what's going on

FILM
"Heat" at Books@Café, Jabel Amman on Thursday Jan. 7 at 10:30 p.m. (Tel. 4650457)

EXHIBITIONS
Photo exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Jan. 16.
Exhibition of ceramics, sculpture, and abstract (plastic) art by Jordanian, Iraqi, Syrian, Lebanese, and Sudanese artists at Hammourabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5336998), until Jan. 25.
Exhibition of Nabatean silver jewelry at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre, off Wadi Saqra Street, until Jan. 15 (Tel. 5699141/2).
"The Warm Winter" — works by several artists at Orfai Art Gallery, Um Uthaina (Tel. 5326932), until Feb. 1.
The Tenth Anniversary Exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists at Darat Al Fuman, Jabel Weibdeh (Tel. 4643251/2), until Jan. 28.

Two ethnic Albanians killed, OSCE inspects alleged mass grave

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AP) — Two ethnic Albanians were reported killed Tuesday, as international monitors headed to inspect an alleged mass grave in Kosovo. Ethnic Albanian rebels, meanwhile, launched their own radio station and news agency.

The Kosovo Information Centre, close to separatist Kosovo Albanian leadership, said two ethnic Albanians who worked at a gasoline station in Vitina, some 40 kilometres south-east of Pristina, were gunned down late Monday.

The centre said the perpetrators and the motive of the killing were unknown. Bodies of more than a dozen ethnic Albanians and Serbs have recently been found in Kosovo in what appeared to be a series of gangland-style killings.

The latest shootings came as a team from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) headed for Urosevac in southern Kosovo to inspect ethnic Albanian rebel claims that 11 women and children were buried in a mass grave there after Serb troops killed them during an offensive against Kosovo separatists last year.

The OSCE, which runs the international monitoring mission in the province, said it hoped to determine whether the Kosovo Liberation Army claim of a mass grave merited a formal investigation by forensic experts.

Meanwhile, the KLA said it launched its radio and news agency based on the Kosovo territory controlled by the rebels. The radio, "Kosova e Lire" (Free Kosovo) reportedly had a one-hour broadcast Monday and the news agency, "Kosova Press," published its first item in the Kosovo Sot daily Tuesday.

Kosova Sot quoted Jakup Krasniqi, a member of KLA's chief of staff, as saying that the two new media outlets "will inform domestic and international public about the just liberation fight of (Kosovo's) people and their army." More than 1,000 people have been killed and some 300,000 uprooted from their homes since Serbian authorities launched a crackdown last February against Kosovo Albanian rebels fighting for independence from Serbia, the larger of two republics left in Yugoslavia. Most of the victims have been ethnic Albanians.

A U.S.-brokered truce in October ended most of the fighting.

But the two sides are nowhere near a negotiated settlement on Kosovo's future status, and a U.S. State Department spokesman warned Monday that time for talks is fast running out.

"We think both sides need to understand that there is not that much time left for a negotiated solution which can give the legitimate rights to the people of Kosovo and protect the national interests of the

Serbs before we face the prospect of renewed and very dangerous conflict this spring," the spokesman, James Rubin, said.

Despite the rebels' apparent unwillingness to compromise, a guerrilla spokesman told the Albanian prime minister on Monday his group would agree to a meeting of rival Kosovo leaders in order to work out a joint strategy.

The Albanian government said Adem Demaci made the statement during a meeting in the Albanian capital Tirana Monday night with Prime Minister Pandeli Majko.

A prominent international humanitarian group denied allegations Monday that it is supplying arms to ethnic Albanian rebels battling for independence in Kosovo.

Bas Tielens, a spokesman for Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders), said Serb accusations that the group is helping Kosovo Albanian guerrillas are unfounded and came "out of the blue."

Earlier Monday, Vukasin Andric, health secretary for Kosovo, had said that members of the Paris-based group were "caught hiding and smuggling weapons for Albanian terrorists." In a statement carried by the independent Beta news agency, Andric did not provide details to back up his accusation.

Tielens said the origin of the charges was unclear, and noted that his organisation has been working in the Serb province since 1993.



Rep. Dennis Hastert (Republican from Illinois) speaks to reporters regarding the issue of President Clinton giving his State of the Union address as scheduled on Jan. 19. Hastert, the probable next speaker of the House, said he wanted to be as 'hospitable to the president as possible' (Reuters photo)

Hastert says he'll work to restore faith in Congress

WASHINGTON (AP) — Representative Dennis Hastert says his main goal when he is chosen speaker of the House is to end the political divisions that have held legislation hostage, and thereby restore the nation's faith in Congress.

"This Congress has to go to work, we have to start to produce good things that the American people want, policy that addresses the needs of the American people," the Illinois Republican said before a meeting with Republican leaders.

"That's our first and most important step in restoring faith in this U.S. House of Representatives."

House Republicans were to meet late Tuesday to choose Hastert, a little-known six-term lawmaker,

to succeed Newt Gingrich as their leader. Wednesday he is to be formally elected speaker with the convening of the 106th session of Congress.

Hastert's surprise rise to the leadership spot followed Gingrich's decision to resign in the wake of Republican losses in the November elections and the announcement last month by Gingrich's expected successor, Rep. Bob Livingston of Louisiana that he had going to try to emulate Newt or anybody else," Hastert, the 57-year-old former high school teacher said when asked how he would differ from the outspoken Gingrich.

"We need to start our agenda now," he said. "We intend not to talk about those issues but deliver."

"One of the things that I want to do is to open the possibilities for this House to work together. We need to work together, especially on very substantive issues, on a bipartisan basis."

He said that his top legislative goals include reforming Social Security and Medicare, improving the nation's education system, providing tax relief and boosting national defense.

"I will be me and I'm not going to try to emulate Newt or anybody else," Hastert, the 57-year-old former high school teacher said when asked how he would differ from the outspoken Gingrich.

"We need to start our agenda now," he said. "We intend not to talk about those issues but deliver."

Campaign for Khmer Rouge trial gathers pace

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — The campaign to bring former Khmer Rouge leaders to justice gathered pace Tuesday as Cambodian officials said they wanted to see two notorious defectors stand trial for their role in the genocide of up to two million people.

"Cambodian authorities wished" to see Khmer Rouge leaders Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea brought to justice, Foreign Minister Hor Namhong was quoted as saying by a French foreign ministry spokesman in Paris.

The government was awaiting "the assessment to be made by experts mandated by the United Nations, as well as other jurists" before deciding whether to try the two leaders who defected last month, the minister said.

Hor Namhong stated the Cambodian position at talks with his French counterpart Hubert Vedrine Monday, and the comments come as an apparent government bid to distance itself from the VIP reception given to the defectors.

He said Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen made Cambodia's position "abundantly clear" in a statement on Jan. 1.

Vedrine expressed "understanding" of Cambodia's position but reminded Hor Namhong of the need to see those who perpetrated the genocide brought to justice.

The spokesman said, Vedrine stressed "the importance of the forthcoming meeting (in February-March) of the advisory group of the World Bank in Tokyo, which should permit a resumption of international aid" to Cambodia, the spokesman added.

Hun Sen, who has come under strong international criticism for warmly welcoming Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea to Phnom Penh last week after their Christmas Day defections, said he had not guaranteed the Khmer Rouge leaders immunity from trial.

"My stand to try the Khmer Rouge continues," he said. Immediately following the defections, Hun Sen had called on people to "dig a hole and bury the past."

Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea were leading architects of the genocidal Pol Pot regime that ruled Cambodia between 1975 and 1979 and cost the lives of up to two million people through execution, torture and hard labour.

The United States has meanwhile stepped up its calls for a trial following a meeting here between Hun Sen and U.S. ambassador Ken Quinn Monday.

"We call upon the government of Cambodia to insist upon accountability for the crimes of the 1975 to 1979 period," said State

Department spokesman James Rubin.

The State Department has said it would prefer to see an international tribunal, created by the U.N. Security Council, hear charges against the Khmer Rouge leaders.

But U.S. officials did not rule out a trial in a Cambodian court.

"We are continuing to consult with the Cambodians and other interested parties on this," Rubin said.

However China — the ultra-Maoist Khmer Rouge's biggest backer as they wreaked genocide on the country — asserted the question was an internal matter for Cambodia.

"As the leaders of the Khmer Rouge come back to the big family of Cambodia gradually, the issue of the Khmer Rouge has become history," foreign ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said at a bi-weekly press briefing.

"As for how the leaders of the Khmer Rouge will be dealt with, this is in essence an internal matter of the Cambodian government and the people and should be decided by the Cambodian government and people independently," he said.

Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan are now back in the former rebel stronghold of Pailin after completing their holiday tour of the country.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Yeltsin maintains low profile into 1999

MOSCOW (AFP) — Virtually invisible as Russian president for much of 1998, Boris Yeltsin will maintain a low profile through the first week of 1999 working at a country retreat. Russian news agencies reported Tuesday. Yeltsin was sidelined for months with ill health in 1998, will work documents at his Rus residence outside Moscow Tuesday. Wednesday, agencies cited the Kremlin as saying, Russia enters a long weekend to mark Orthodox Christmas, which falls Thursday, with officials not due back at their desks the following Monday. But the Russian president does not have a busier schedule thereafter, with a trip to France pencilled for Jan. 28 and 29, and a steady trickle of visitors to Moscow including European Union leaders in February for an EU-Russia summit. Interfax reported Tuesday that the Kremlin chief is also planning a trip to Poland, but no date has been set. Yeltsin's health woes deepened last year with bouts of chills, pneumonia and nervous exhaustion but in recent appearances he has appeared fitter.

India must clearly spell out nuclear policy, says U.S. envoy

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India must specify in "concrete terms" the number of missiles and warheads it needs to ensure its security or risk being viewed as a regional threat, U.S. Ambassador Richard Celeste said Tuesday. Celeste told the Press Trust of India that New Delhi, which staged nuclear tests in May, should be seen as an "open-ended threat" by neighbors. "How many missile systems and warheads does India need to have a minimum nuclear deterrent," Celeste asked. "I think some expression of what India really wants and needs and strives to achieve in a reasonably specific time ... is important to not only help the U.S. understand but also specific neighbors to understand ... so that there isn't an open-ended threat." The United States imposed sanctions on India after the tests, despite protests from Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee that Washington and the rest of the international community refused to recognise India's legitimate security needs. Celeste said Indian assurances on a no-first use of nuclear weapons and a promise not to fuel an arms race were "encouraging but ... general statements." While post-test nuclear talks between New Delhi and Washington have made "substantial progress," Celeste said "substantial work" remained to be done. An eighth round of talks is scheduled for later this month.

Bangladeshi scientists claim anti-arsenic compound to clean water

DHAKA (AFP) — Bangladeshi scientists have developed a low-cost chemical compound to purify water contaminated with arsenic, a major problem in this South Asian country, a reported said Tuesday. The Akter Kagoj daily said the powdered compound was prepared by mixing several salts with an iron component, and could purify one litre of water at a cost of 20 paisa (0.4 cents). The scientists, from the state-run Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, included Afabuddin Ahmed, Tahurun Nigar, Ashish Kumar Sarker, Meher Nigar Chowdhury and Samiran Bhattacharya. A patent has been applied for, the report said. Underground waters in large areas of Bangladesh have been contaminated by arsenic, putting at risk nearly 60 million people. Officials say 3,247 people have been poisoned so far. Excessive use of underground water is draining the water table and concentrating naturally occurring arsenic that filters from the soil. Levels of two parts per million have been recorded in some places. The chemical purifier was tested and displayed at a recent scientific exhibition in Dhaka.

Bitter cold settles in behind snow-laden storm in the U.S.

NEW YORK (AP) — A snowstorm left waist-high snowdrifts in western New York, dumping up to 38 centimetres as it closed highways, businesses and airports Monday. Schools in the snow-savvy city were closed again Tuesday as forecasters predicted up to several more centimetres of snow. It was the latest blow in the Arctic blast that began over the weekend and has left much of the Midwest and New England under up to 60 centimetres of snow. It has also plunged the eastern two-thirds of the nation into a deep freeze. It was below -12 Celsius across much of the South early Tuesday — even normally balmy New Orleans dropped to -1 Celsius — and school was cancelled as far south as Oklahoma. It was much worse to the north, where the wind chill on the northern Plains dipped to -31 Celsius. At least 60 deaths have been blamed on the weather, many of them from traffic accidents. Airports around the nation were still having trouble accommodating passengers, even in areas where the storm is long gone. Early Tuesday, stranded passengers at Detroit Metropolitan Airport received more bad news as Northwest Airlines cancelled more than 150 flights because it had trouble getting crews in. Thirty centimetres of snow were on the ground in Detroit. A Northwest spokesman in Minneapolis said the airline has cancelled more than 1,100 flights since Saturday.

No fairytale start as Britain's first prison storyteller comes under fire

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's first official prison storyteller came under fire Tuesday as critics feared he would help inmates to concoct alibis, the daily Guardian reported. Post John Rowe was appointed by the government to help prisoners at a low-security jail in Norfolk, eastern England, learn about "the structure of verbal narrative." The Home Office said his role was to help some of the 644 inmates create and tape bedtime stories to keep them in touch with their young children. He will work among prisoners with poor reading and writing skills. "It is hoped this will help prisoners maintain family relations and reduce reoffending," said a spokesman. But critics were well able to express their concerns. One local politician said: "I am speechless. 'I would have thought that most of the inmates in the prison were pretty good at telling tales already without having someone to teach them.' A former policeman for the region suggested the scheme would help prisoners "concoct a better alibi next time."

Painter Jose Vela Zanetti dies

BURGOS, Spain (AFP) — Spanish artist Jose Vela Zanetti, whose human rights mural decorates the United Nations headquarters in New York, died in hospital here aged 83, a spokesman for his art foundation said Tuesday. Vela Zanetti was hospitalised a week ago after a fall at his home here. He died late Monday. The artist was exiled in the Dominican Republic during the Spanish civil war. He also worked in Colombia, Mexico, the United States and Switzerland. He was chosen to paint the U.N. mural in 1952 after an international competition. The huge mural was restored in 1998. In Spain, he was best known for his countryside and religious paintings.

German government defends planned citizenship reforms

BERLIN (AP) — Pledging not to be deterred by opposition "slander," the government announced Tuesday it would counter a petition drive against its planned citizenship law reforms with an information campaign of its own.

"We're sticking with our intention and think that the law will be all ready by summer," said Cornelia Sonntag-Wolgast, parliamentary state secretary in the Interior Ministry.

She accused the conservative parties, which moved into the opposition with the September election of Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, of "slander" for suggesting that making it easier for foreigners to get German citizenship would lead to more violence and terrorism in Germany.

"There will be a majority (for the reform) among the public if we argue properly and don't indulge in a form of

scaresongering," she told southwest German broadcaster.

The government plans to relax Germany's nationality law, which is based on bloodline, not place of birth, to make it easier for foreigners to become Germans and still keep their original citizenship.

But many conservatives argue that the reforms would give special privileges to foreigners and could lead to potentially dangerous divided loyalties.

On German television Monday night, Christian Democratic Union chairman Wolfgang Schauble said dual citizenship would endanger the integration of foreigners in Germany, not promote it.

In addition, he said it would lead to considerably greater immigration.

But the federal government's commissioner for foreigner affairs, Marieluise

Beck, accused the Christian Democrats and their Bavarian allies, the Christian Social Union, of trying to incite the public against the reforms to raise their own profile.

She said the government would counter the petition drive, which the conservatives plan to launch Jan. 24, with an information campaign of its own.

Even some Christian Democrats criticised the petition drive Tuesday. Berlin's commissioner for foreigner affairs, Barbara John, warned against fighting a "party struggle on the backs of foreigners in Germany."

The chairman of the party's social policy committee, Rainer Eppelmann, told the Berliner Zeitung newspaper that a petition drive would only make sense if it leads to a broad and substantive debate. He added he hoped "that along with that emotions will be kept in check."

Romanian minister despairs over NATO entry

BUCHAREST (AFP) — Romanian Defence Minister Victor Babuc lamented Tuesday that the country's prospects of joining NATO had been effectively "cancelled" by proposals to slash its budget this year.

He said the planned 1999 budget cuts, part of Bucharest's attempts to resolve its economic woes, mean Romania had no chance of being invited to join the Atlantic Alliance in the near future.

"The draft budget completely blocks the process of modernising the army, compromises the operational capacity of our troops and makes any debate about preparations for NATO entry

pointless," he said.

The proposed defence budget represented 1.98 per cent of GDP, as against 2.23 per cent last year, he said, arguing that it "cancels our chances of being admitted to NATO."

Three former communist countries — Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic — are due to be formally admitted to NATO at the Washington summit marking its 50th anniversary in April.

The draft Romanian budget is due to be presented to parliament in mid-January, and plans to reduce the overall deficit from 3.6 per cent last year two per cent this year.

Bucharest, which is at the back of the queue for EU membership, is currently in negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on how to ease its economic problems to secure further IMF credit.

Romania had no hope of being invited to join by April, Babuc said. "The only credible argument which could be used at the Washington summit was an increase, even a symbolic one, in military spending," he said.

"The reduction of this expenditure presents for our partners an argument against inviting this country to join the Alliance," he added.

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Driving into 2000 — Ford Motor Company Vice President Jim O'Connor (right) introduces two new Ford trucks, the Explorer Sport Trac (left) and the F-150 Crew Cab (right) on Jan. 4 during the press preview days of the North American International Auto Show in Detroit. The Explorer hybrid, which combines the cab section of the Explorer sport-utility with a hard-covered, lockable cargo bed behind it, goes on sale in 2000 as a 2001 model. The F-150, also slated for sale in 2000, has a slightly shorter cargo bed than other pickups but offers a full-sized, four-person, four-door cab (Reuters photo)

Pakistani police arrest Sunni militants after slaughter of rival Shiites

MULTAN, Pakistan (AP) — Thousands of mourners burying the victims of a massacre at a Shiite Muslim mosque beat their chest, wailed and cried out Tuesday for Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's removal from power and an army takeover.

"Murderer... murderer Nawaz Sharif, murderer," they cried during the funeral services for 11 of the 16 Shiite Muslim worshippers who were slain Monday.

The dead were buried in the same Qureshi More mosque where the vicious attack had occurred, some 30 kilometres from Multan. The other five victims were buried separately in their home villages located nearby.

"The army should come now to bring peace in the country," said Tariq Shah, leader of the militant Shiite Muslim group, Tehrik-e-Jaffria. An estimated 6,000 people attending the funeral

shouted their agreement.

Police are blaming the attack at the mosque on Sunni Muslim militants belonging to the radical Sipah-e-Sahbah Pakistan (SSP) or Guardians of the Friends of the Prophet.

Police conducted overnight raids on their offices and arrested 46 Sunni Muslim activists.

Police and paramilitary soldiers were deployed by the hundreds throughout the province to prevent violent clashes between militants of SSP and the Shiite Tehrik-e-Jaffria Pakistan.

"Never before have we felt so unsafe. Nawaz Sharif's government has failed to protect us," said Shah.

Other Shiite Muslim leaders said if the army is not ready to take over then it should at least force the dismissal of the Punjab provincial government.

The bloodletting between rival Islamic sects has

increased in recent months, most of it in eastern Punjab province, the political heartland of Pakistan where 60 per cent of the population lives.

Most Pakistanis are Sunni Muslims who have no quarrel with their Shiite Muslim brethren. The fight has been between a small group of heavily armed militants belonging to both sects.

Hundreds of people have died in religiously motivated violence and some Shiite leaders warned that they would resort to defending themselves, which would further escalate the violence.

The youngest victim of Monday's massacre was a 12-year-old boy.

"I sent my son to the mosque to pray and he was brought home to me dead," said his mother Razia Bibi, who wrapped herself in a shawl shaking and crying.

"The killers are roaming free. The government is

doing nothing to stop hand-ful of extremists responsible for sectarian violence," said Allama Sajid Naqvi, a leader of Tehrik-e-Jaffria.

"It is the responsibility of the government to protect people. Why the government is not coming down heavy on these extremists?" he asked.

Police say they have sought help from a British anti-terrorism team which is to assist the authorities in combating terrorism.

Hundreds of people die each year in Pakistan in religious and ethnic related violence.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who escaped an assassination attempt on Sunday outside the Punjab provincial capital of Lahore vowed to end terrorism.

"I am deeply shocked over this tragic incident.... The police has been ordered to arrest the culprits within 24 hours," Sharif was quoted as saying.

Police responsible for Anwar's injuries, authorities admit

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Malaysian police inflicted the injuries on former deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim that drew international condemnation after his detention, the authorities admitted Tuesday.

A statement by Attorney-General Mohd Abdullah was released as Anwar's corruption trial was told that semen stains on a mattress being used in evidence against him could have been planted.

Mohd said he had found the Malaysian Royal Police "fully responsible" for injuries suffered by Anwar in September, as the former leader was in their custody.

But the "ongoing investigation has not identified the person responsible for the injury," he said in a statement reported by Bernama news agency.

Mohd said medical reports showed there were some injuries sustained by Anwar even before he was arrested.

"Based on the medical reports and the investigation file of the special investigation team, as a whole I am satisfied that several injuries alleged by (Anwar) are not true, while there are injuries

which are proved to have been caused by police officers while he was in police custody."

Anwar was sacked as deputy premier and finance minister on Sept. 2 and arrested 18 days later. He had a black eye when produced for his first court appearances and said he had been beaten until unconscious on his first night in custody.

The injuries put the international spotlight on Anwar's case and his accusations of corruption and abuse of power against the administration of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad.

Mahathir said he sacked his former protégé because he was unfit to rule. Anwar now faces several charges of sexual misconduct and corruption which he has denied.

The attorney-general said an investigation had not been completed and the evidence obtained so far was inadequate for action to be taken.

"After further investigation has been fully carried out, if there is prima facie evidence, I as public prosecutor will not hesitate to consent to the institution of prosecution against any individual proved to have committed or

abetted the commission of such offence."

Bernama said the medical reports submitted to Mohd were prepared by doctors from two hospitals, including one from forensic experts and one eye specialist.

Mohd said there were some contradictions between the forensic report and the other medical reports and he had ordered police to take statements from the doctors involved.

The 10th week of Anwar's trial is again concentrating on semen stains on a mattress being used as prosecution evidence to back accusations of sexual misconduct.

Criminal investigations officer Mohamad Rodwan Mohamad Yusof admitted the evidence could have been planted. He said the mattress was kept for nearly four months after being seized before it was sent for tests.

He could not tell if the 13 stains tested for DNA were those he saw when the mattress was taken in July.

"I did not investigate if anyone had planted those things on the mattress," Mohamad Rodwan said under cross-examination. "I

did not take any photo of the mattress because I didn't think it was necessary."

The stains he saw "could have been other stains" and he could not tell if they were "coffee stains" or "rat droppings."

Asked if semen could have been taken from Anwar and planted on the mattress, Mohamad Rodwan said: "Yes. In my investigation, I did not eliminate this possibility."

The court heard last week that DNA tests on stains on the mattress matched those of Anwar and Shamsidar Taharin, the wife of his then private secretary with whom he was alleged to have had an affair.

The court had heard that blood was taken from the former deputy premier on Sept. 28, and later tested for DNA without his consent.

Mohamad Rodwan said he saw Anwar's eye was swollen on Sept. 28, and there was a brief outburst from Anwar's relatives in court when the judge prevented further questioning on that line.

The trial resumes Wednesday.

Malaysian politician, wife detained briefly for squatters protest

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — A Malaysian opposition leader, Syed Husin Ali, and his wife were detained briefly Tuesday, along with seven others, following protests over the demolition of squatter areas.

Syed Husin, who heads the tiny Malaysian People's Party, told AFP they were detained after he visited the squatter area in Ampang on the outskirts of the capital.

The opposition leader said he, his wife and four others were released after three hours in detention.

"Now the police are saying that they did not arrest nine, only six, but we were all in the same police van, in the same lock-up," he said. "We are still waiting for news of the other three."

Syed Husin said he earlier visited the area to check on the families whose homes were demolished by a developer on Dec. 30.

Only 19 out of the 56 households received notices of eviction, but 28 houses had been demolished, he added.

The party said in a statement it "regrets that the developer has not acted humanely and have not heeded the advice of the Selangor Sultan to stop and reexamine

their actions."

In a separate statement, the wife of sacked deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim urged the housing ministry to halt the demolition.

"As a general principle, no housing developer should be allowed to demolish squatter houses until temporary alternative shelter has been provided," said Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, who now heads a pro-tem committee for the Social Justice Movement (ADIL).

"The existence of squatter communities in the nation's capital and in other parts of the country, and the lack of alternatives for squatters facing eviction highlight yet again the serious housing problem facing the poor."

Wan Azizah said her husband gave "priority to low-cost housing" before he was sacked as deputy premier and finance minister on Sept. 2.

"ADIL hopes that in the interest of justice and humanity, the government will make the provision of low-cost housing for the poor its number one agenda in 1999," she added.

Anwar has since been arrested and charged with 10 counts of corruption and sodomy, all which he has denied.

Zimbabwe's Mugabe hits back at Britain over criticism

HARARE (AFP) — Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe has hit back at Britain after receiving a cold reception during a recent visit to London, where some newspapers described him as a tyrant and suggested he should be arrested for human rights abuses.

Mugabe was quoted by government-controlled media Tuesday as saying that the British were at the forefront of human rights abuses in Zimbabwe during a century of colonialism — when the country was called Rhodesia — but were now masquerading as champions of democracy.

"Goodness me," said Mugabe. "What do the British actually think they are doing — building good relations between ourselves or destroying them?"

He said Britain had "oppressed us for a whole century. We were put in prison. Others were killed, and it was all in the name of British colonialism."

The Herald newspaper said that during his tour of Europe in December, Mugabe was "well received in France and Italy."

"But when the president-ial entourage passed through London, newspapers there called Comrade Mugabe all sorts of names including 'tyrant, dictator, despot and even Pinochet,' among others."

Some British papers had suggested that Mugabe should be arrested in the same way as former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, who was detained during a visit to Britain in October.

Mugabe said there were no longer detention camps in Zimbabwe, as there were during white-minority rule, which ended in 1980 after a bloody guerrilla war.

He pointed out that even former prime Minister Ian Smith, who led the whites in that war, remained free and was protected by the laws of the country.

Referring to Zimbabwe's land reform programme — one of the issues which has caused friction between the two countries recently — Mugabe said he was determined to go ahead with plans to take land from whites to give to blacks.

"Those British lords who have their 'Little England' and are absentee landlords will lose their 'Little England'," he said.

Indonesia may send combat troops back to Aceh

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia warned Tuesday that it might send combat troops back to Aceh following fresh separatist attacks in the rebellious province, where nearly 20 people have been killed in a week of violence.

"It may happen," State Secretary Akbar Tanjung said when asked about the possibility of putting the province on the island of Sumatra back under what is termed a "military operations status" which ended in August after nine years.

"It is true that for Aceh, we need to improve security. We also need to try to find out the roots of the problems," Tanjung told reporters. He gave no further details.

The military effectively ran the province for nine years, sending in combat troops to battle a growing insurgency.

In the process it was accused of widespread human rights abuse includ-

ing summary executions, rape and torture.

The military apologised for its past abuses in Aceh and said in August it was withdrawing all combat troops as it lifted the "military operations status" in the province.

Separatist movements have been simmering for years in the staunchly Muslim and resource-rich province.

The Acehnese accuse Jakarta of plundering the region's wealth, of doing little to provide locals with social welfare and of bringing in outsiders to do even low-skilled work.

One Western ambassador spoke of an embarrassed silence when he asked police officers, during a recent visit to the province, if any of them was Acehnese.

Monday, Indonesian troops opened fire to disperse a mob near the home of a separatist whom they

claimed masterminded weekend violence there in which nine people died, witnesses and the military said.

The army says separatist snipers started the shooting. Witnesses said that in Monday's raid, security forces fired warning shots to disperse a crowd of hundreds who had surrounded the separatist's house in Lhokseumawe, some 1,600 km northwest of Jakarta.

Witnesses said troops failed to find the man, Ahmad Kandang, but added they saw 15 people being taken away in a military truck.

The military said the town was back to normal Tuesday though a number of shops were closed.

Riots flared again in the restive province last week when a machete-wielding mob Tuesday stopped a public bus carrying off-duty soldiers near Lhokseumawe.

The military, which blames separatist rebels for

the attack, say eight of the soldiers were tortured and killed.

Indonesia also faces separatist insurgencies in the remote eastern province of Irian Jaya and the former Portuguese colony of East Timor.

Separatist movements have been on the rise since the downfall in May of former President Suharto after 32 years of iron rule during which any attempts to break away from Jakarta were brutally crushed.

Indonesia has also been plagued by spiralling unrest and crime over the past year as a crippling economic crisis pushes millions into poverty amid persistent political instability.

President B.J. Habibie Tuesday repeated his warning that if Indonesians do not treat their new-found freedom responsibly then attempts to give the country a rare taste of democracy will founder.

Scottish land reform plans anger landowners

EDINBURGH (AFP) — Britain's Labour government Tuesday unveiled plans to reform the 900-year-old feudal system of land ownership in Scotland, but faced fierce resistance from landowners.

The planned legislation will include new powers enabling the government to buy mismanaged estates through compulsory purchase in a move designed to deter absentee landlords.

Most of Scotland is owned by some 1,500 landowners, including from England and abroad. Many do not live on their properties, which can cover up to 320 square kilometres.

They include ex-Beatle Sir Paul McCartney, Sheikh Mohammed al-Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai, and Harrods owner Mohammed al-Fayed, as well as wealthy

aristocrats who have owned the land for generations.

"There is a consensus across Scotland that legislation to break down centuries old barriers to land reform should be one of the first acts of the Scottish Parliament," said Scottish Secretary Donald Dewar.

The measures, which are to be submitted before the new semi-autonomous Scottish parliament due to be elected on May 1, prompted a hostile response from the Scottish Landowners' Federation (SLF).

SLF spokesman Andrew Dingwall-Fordyce said his members believed in self-regulation, and were prepared to go to the European Court of Justice to resist the new powers.

But the pro-independence Scottish National Party

(SNP) said it wanted even stricter intervention to boost tenants' rights and deter absentee landlords.

SNP land spokesman Fergus Ewing said any reform must prevent the type of dispute seen on the island of Eigg, bought by its residents last year after a prolonged tussle with German artist Martin Maruma who purchased the island in 1995.

Ewing said reform had to be "sufficiently strong and democratic to deter bad landlords such as Mr Maruma from buying estates such as Eigg in the first place, rather than trying to pick up the pieces once the damage was done."

He said the SNP wanted local communities to have the right to intervene in cases of abuse, with the possibility of compulsory purchase.

Some English landowners fear that if the SNP gains a majority in the new parliament, it would penalise them.

Memories are still raw in Scotland of the 18th century Highland Clearances, when many Scots were forced to abandon their small-holdings by English troops, with many emigrating to Canada or Australia.

The government's proposals would also allow communities in remote areas to apply for cash from the British national lottery to buy an estate if it comes on the market.

It would give tenant-farmers, known as crofters in Scotland, the right to buy their land at any time. Other plans include a "responsible right to roam" in the countryside.

S. Pole trekkers still blizzard bound in tent

AUCKLAND (AFP) — Three men trekking to the South Pole were Tuesday set to remain tent-bound for another few days as they continue to be battered by a blizzard.

The trio, led by New Zealander Peter Hillary, had planned to reach the South Pole on Christmas Day but weather conditions and illness mean they are now running more than three weeks behind.

The delays have strained fuel and food rations.

But Jon Muir, one of the three trekkers, said Tuesday the trio had sufficient supplies to get them to the South Pole where they are due to get fresh provisions.

"Although we have full

rations for about two weeks, we can stretch this out to a month quite easily.

"It is by no means a dangerous situation. We would just like it to be a bit more comfortable," he said. Muir, fellow Australian adventurer Eric Phillips and Hillary, son of mountaineer Sir Edmund Hillary, are retracing the ill-fated expedition of English explorer Robert Falcon Scott.

Scott and his team members died in 1912 from exhaustion, starvation and cold only a few kilometres from a food dump, and only days from journey's end after being delayed by blizzards.

If Hillary's ice-trek team succeeds in its Scott Base-

to-South Pole round trip of 3,000 kilometres, it will be the longest unsupported polar trek ever.

Muir said he had contacted meteorologists at the U.S. McMurdo Station who suggested the blizzard, which began Sunday, would last another two days. The team has spent the last three days about 350 kilometres from the South Pole in camp weathering the storm, which has exacerbated delays caused by sickness.

Phillips has had minor frostbite on his thumb and Muir has had a bout of gastroenteritis.

But he said the trio was now in good health and spirits. "Despite our situation, blizzards in, inside the tent,

low on food and fuel... our physical... mental and emotional condition is fantastic.

"We're jovial, we're spirited. We're just cooling our heels waiting for the storm to blow over and then off we scoot across the plateau again," he said.

The team left Scott Base on Nov. 4 to ski-haul supply sleds to the South Pole.

Unlike Scott, who started out with dogs and ponies to haul sleds, the latter-day trio are using extra-light technology, including special quadfoil "kites" to speed their progress. They also carry satellite phones.

Their initial plan was to complete the round trip by the beginning of February.

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Resuming brotherly ties

THE VISIT of Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al Dakhil to Amman and the talks he held with HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and other senior officials usher in a new era in Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations after eight years of strained ties in the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait in 1990. Over the past few years, the relations between the two Arab countries started mending on several fronts. The resumption of Kuwait Airways flights to Amman in July of 1997 signalled the beginning of the process of building of new relations based on goodwill, respect and appreciation.

Ever since the disastrous Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, His Majesty King Hussein, Prince Hassan and other Jordanian officials went into great pains to explain the Kingdom's true intentions and policy towards Kuwait and the Gulf region. It is a good omen that the Kuwaiti leadership has decided to respond to Jordan's repeated overtures for full reconciliation and better understanding. Following an invitation to Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Al Khatib to visit Kuwait, the visit of the Kuwaiti minister to Amman crowns a series of steps undertaken by both sides to start a new page of brotherly relations.

The fruits of these better relations should be bountiful. The first thing that the two should embark on is the examination of the file of Jordanian expatriates who worked in Kuwait for decades and contributed a great deal to its development before their expulsion in the wake of the Gulf crisis. There is now a new hope that these workers, merchants and businessmen would be able to renew their bonds with their Kuwaiti brethren. Trade and commerce between Kuwait and Jordan can also be expected to resume and flourish in order to reach new levels. Jordan can also be an open market for Kuwaiti products of all kinds. Part of our energy needs could be imported from Kuwait. Above all, the leaderships of the two countries could contribute to healing Arab wounds and ending Arab crises.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Tareq Masarweh said the proposed Arab foreign ministers summit will not end the Arab Nation's "grief." The last Arab meeting took several decisions regarding the peace process and Palestine. Masarweh said, but nothing changed; the Palestinians are still suffering and the international community is still ignoring Arab pleas. What good will would such a meeting do for Iraq, the writer asked. The Arab summit now forms more of an "embarrassment" as Arab regimes, incapable of protecting Palestine, Iraq, Libya and Sudan, are required to reclaim their rights from the U.S. According to Masarweh, some Arab League sources have said there is also danger inherent in holding the conference due to "sharp differences between Arabs. However, claimed the writer, postponing the event until Jan. 24 gives the U.S. the chance to strike Iraq again.

Al Dustour's Mazen Saket said it is obvious that there is unanimous agreement that Jordan is currently facing an economic depression in all sectors. However, it is dangerous and strange that such unanimity coincides with official statements denying that there are immediate solutions to the problem. Although the economic crisis is a result of regional and international turbulence, surrendering to the problem will only result in negative effects. A courageous review of all financial policies and economic approaches is a must in order to confront and manage one of the most important issues facing the country, concluded Saket.

Angola: The curse of Savimbi

By Gwynne Dyer

ON SATURDAY, for the second time in a week, they shot down a United Nations plane soon after take-off from the besieged Angolan city of Huambo. U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan was "outraged", and Issa Diallo, head of the U.N. Observer Mission in Angola, said he thought U.N. flights were being specifically targeted. Six other flights out of Huambo that day were not fired on, but "the U.N. plane asked for and got authorisation, takes off, and gets shot down." Yet nobody said the obvious: "Savimbi did it." Both planes were shot down over territory controlled by UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola). Jonas Savimbi's rebel army, and Savimbi has always treated the U.N. with contempt. But the U.N. never calls a spade a spade in Angola — with results that have been disastrous for the country.

Savimbi is a monster from a distant past, when Angola was still a Portuguese colony and the major liberation movement there was the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), which was both Marxist and non-racial. Lisbon saw the MPLA as especially dangerous because it drew support from all the tribes of Angola, from the large mixed-race population, and even from

some whites. So in the late 60s the ambitious and well-educated young Jonas Savimbi (he has a medical degree from Lisbon and a PhD from Lausanne) was recruited by the Portuguese secret police to start up a rival movement based on his own Ovimbundu tribe: UNITA. The goal was to weaken the MPLA by splitting off the Ovimbundu, who account for about a third of Angola's people. It has worked all too well. A revolution at home forced Portugal to pull out of Angola in 1975, but the MPLA and UNITA could not agree to form a government together. More precisely, the Cold War strategists who saw Africa as a battleground enticed them into war by promising them enough arms to crush the other side and form a government alone.

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and the apartheid regime in South Africa gave Savimbi arms and money, and a joint South African-UNITA offensive got most of the way to the capital, Luanda, in 1976. But the Soviets sent 50,000 Cuban troops to drive them back, and the struggle subsided into a 15-year-long guerrilla war. It was a debilitating conflict that killed several hundred thousand Angolans, but UNITA, kept afloat by U.S. and South African subsidies, had no chance of winning. The MPLA was the legal government, and controlled most of Angola's rich resources — it is

Africa's second-largest oil producer and third-largest diamond exporter — as well as most of the territory.

Despite the war, the MPLA even managed to build one of Africa's best medical, educational and welfare systems in most of the country (though there was no nonsense about democracy). UNITA used Maoist methods — Savimbi was a Communist at university, though he later changed ideology to suit his backers — to create an Orwellian tyranny in the region he controlled, but there was almost no development in his zone.

Then the end of the Cold War in 1989, followed by the end of white minority rule in South Africa, pulled the carpet out from under both Angolan combatants. Dealing over their heads, the Americans, Russians, and South Africans cut a deal that sent the MPLA's Cuban troops home, gave independence to South African-ruled Namibia — and forced Angola to hold a U.N.-supervised election.

It was a shambles. The government's army melted away after the cease-fire, but Savimbi filled the U.N.'s demobilisation camps with old men and boys while keeping his real army intact. The U.N. tolerated his foot-dragging, arguing that it could all be sorted out after the election — but then, to Savimbi's vast surprise and

utter fury, he lost the September 1992 election. Practically nobody outside the Ovimbundu-dominated Central Highlands voted for UNITA (and even many of them were coerced into it).

Savimbi claimed that the results were rigged (the U.N. said otherwise), and UNITA's secret army overran two-thirds of the country before the MPLA could rebuild its forces. Most cities in the interior were wrecked, all the infrastructure built up over 15 years was lost, the death toll rose to half a million (in a population of only 12 million), and Savimbi captured the diamond-producing provinces that largely finance his operations today. The U.N. stood idly by until an MPLA counter-offensive began to win back much of the lost territory in 1994, and then brokered a new cease-fire that gave UNITA a big share in a coalition government (with no nonsense about elections this time). Savimbi agreed, and over 8,000 U.N. troops were sent to supervise the disarmament process — but once again, Savimbi kept his best troops back.

The Luanda government knew what Savimbi was up to when the cease-fire violations and local land-grabs started mounting early this year, but it's no longer the poor-but-honest Marxist regime of the 70s and 80s. The Marxism is gone, but so is the honesty and dedication: the MPLA regime is

now one of the most corrupt and least competent in Africa. So its desperate recent efforts to rebuild its army have not produced a professional fighting force — as it discovered when large-scale fighting began again last month. The U.N. knew that Savimbi had preserved the core of his army, but last year it withdrew its peace-keeping troops anyway, leaving only a thousand observers behind. The Security Council issued a strong statement blaming the vast majority of cease-fire violations on Savimbi, but did nothing except to impose a (very leaky) embargo on his vastly lucrative diamond-smuggling operations.

Now the cease-fire is over in all but name, and Savimbi turns out to have bought far more heavy weapons than anyone suspected. UNITA again threatens to overrun most of central Angola — and it's the only side with a motive for killing U.N. military observers who could confirm its violations. But the U.N. still obsessively pursues its policy of "even-handedness", refusing to acknowledge what is plain to everyone on the ground — and Angola goes back to hell.

The writer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries. Dr. James Zogby will return next week.



Way back when men were men

By Julie Burchill

LAST YEAR, on Mother's Day, Tommy Lee sent Pamela Anderson, his estranged wife and mother of his two boys, a card. Inside he wrote: "It must have been hard looking after the three of us." This was also the year in which Richard Gere claimed the appeal of his ex-wife, the shatteringly sexy Cindy Crawford, had been mostly "maternal" and that they had not had sex on their wedding night.

And who will forget Will Carling, explaining that part of the reason he had walked out on his girlfriend — the intriguingly named Ali Cockayne — and their baby was because he looked at the boy getting lots of attention from his mother and thought: "Hrm, I'd like some of that" before starting an affair?

Suddenly, last year's most grotesque Jerry Springer Show, The Adult Babies, made total sense. The Man With The Child In His Eyes has become The Man With The Crap In His Nappy. That is, an untoward proportion of men seem totally incapable of growing up. Leading to a massive epidemic of Women With A Pain In The Neck.

Don't get me wrong: I've got nothing against youth. Give me a boy who can do it five times a night between bouts with Lara Croft and I just don't care that he thinks Tiffany's is a transport cafe and Verdi a type of green pasta. But if I want youth, I'll have youth: perfectly smooth, no stretch marks on the mind or body, eyes not bloodshot from too many bullshots. If I want immaturity, I'll choose a gorgeous boy with no ambition and a sweet nature. But what, it seems to me, most women of my generation are getting is the worst of both worlds: the tragic, thwarted, spreading body of the middle-aged man housing the spirit and soul of the surly, sulky, pre-teen brat.

Like most fatal personality traits, it probably starts in the nursery. While boys are encouraged to be "real boys", i.e. thick, running around causing havoc, girls are being praised for being "little mothers" by the time they can toddle. Little toy kitchens, little toy feather dusters and, worst of all, little toy babies who cry prettily and piss eau de cologne. What seeds does it plant in a young, impressionable female mind, to be yearning for "My First Baby" from the age of three?

Whatever the reason, we are told that girls "mature" quicker than boys. True, this

is often an excuse used by geriatric men who have been screwing female children, e.g. Bill Wyman and Mandy Smith. But this miraculous maturation would seem to cover a multitude of male sins.

By the time he reaches his twenties, a young man has heard the Woman Mature, Man Immature mantra so often, it strikes him as the height of logic that, when he finally gets around to cohabiting with a woman not his mother, he can continue dropping his dirty clothes on the floor, burping blithely and having to be nagged into changing his socks. And two little words will get him home free: "Sorry, Mum!" Far from standing up for old ideas of masculinity against the monstrous regiments of feminism, Laddism was a pleasure-crazed capitulation to the sensual pleasures of infantilism.

It celebrated big nourishing breasts, incontinence and fellatio, which historically was a method nursemaids used to quiet crying baby boys.

Even the most envious of couples, the rich and famous, cannot avoid the fact that Boy Meets Girl appears to have mutated into Madonna Meets Child. Flick through any gossip magazine and count the starchy constituents of the Hall of Fame's Mother and Toddler Group: Michael and Cheryl Barrymore, Sean and Robin Penn (he made her cry on live TV when he gave his answer as: "Two hookers and an eighth of cocaine" on being asked his idea of heaven), Nick and Gill Faldo and his blonde playmates.

Or they may just bugger off, hissy with sibling envy, when the patter of tiny feet other than their own turns up — see Carling and Daniel Day-Lewis. According to those who have seen Posh Spice and David Beckham together, he is extraordinarily dependent on her, whispering in her ear like the shyest child in the playground while she translates his thoughts.

But better the bashful Beckham than the bully boy rap stars, in whom infantilism takes a vicious turn. Whether raping the girls and making them cry, or blaming black women for the bad prospects of black men while worshipping capitalism, rap represents the ugliest aspect of all the male inability to grow up.

The trouble is, men have got it too soft these days. In the past, just the process of being alive saw to it that boys grew up. P.D.Q. shoved into factories at 14, as my father was, deprived of sex before mar-

riage, adulthood seemed both the natural and desirable state for any boy on the right side of adolescence. These days, educated until they say "when", with sex on tap, there simply seems no point in growing

They don't make them like they used to, that's for sure

up. Add to this the appalling role models that came about with the advent of youth culture, from James Dean to Liam Gallagher, and what you have is a recipe for permanent Peter Panhood. Sometimes they want to stop. James Dean died at 24 and the incongruity of dressing like him at 42 eventually his home to even the most grotesquely self-adoring, grey-haired, blue-jeaned "boy". But the Peter Pan years keep creeping up, as Mick Jagger proves — he'll be chasing girls young enough to be his night nurse when he's using a Zimmer. Simon Nye has decided against writing another series of Men Behaving Badly because, he says: "It may be fun to watch men in their thirties being buffoons, but as their forties approach the spectacle becomes a bit unsavoury." But it's too late to stop now.

They don't make them like they used to, that's for sure. My dad took five years to die from asbestos poisoning, during which time he never uttered a word of complaint. At his death, he requested that there be no flowers, no ashes, no headstone and no death notice in the local paper (we disobeyed the last one). He left no disease diaries on special discount for Christmas at Waterstone's and no yellowing newspaper columns celebrating hypochondria. He left us no bad, or even vaguely embarrassing, memories. He left no sign that he was here at all. Nothing, that is, except a giant shadow which will fall forever across all the men I have ever and will ever know, making puking, mewling moral pygmies of them all. This, then, was truly a Man.

— The Guardian

LETTERS

What rot!

To the editor:

I AM WRITING in protest to the article "CIA aiding Indian missionaries to spread Christianity" (JT Jan. 4th).

The title sounds like headline facts but when the article is read closely, you find that it is only an opinion piece. Even the financial figure given is no more than a stab in the dark.

Fact 1: The church was healthy and over 400 years old in India when Mohammed was born, having been started by the Apostle Thomas. It was a thriving 1300 years old when Columbus sailed to America, so why should the CIA be blamed for its existence in India?

Fact 2: The CIA/current American Government would prefer the whole world to be secular, not religious. They have no reason to put money into religious propaganda.

We do appreciate having a local English language paper, but buying a paper implies trust that some truth is being printed. This article broke that trust.

K. Hain
Amman

My enemy's enemy...

To the editor:

THOUGH STILL deeply affected by the air strikes launched against Iraq some two weeks ago, I feel it is time to take a look at the long-term alternatives for the international community vis-a-vis Iraq.

My point is: What language does someone like Saddam Hussein understand, who, on the one hand condemns the killing of Iraqi civilians during an air strike (that he was very much responsible for due to his diplomatic brinkmanship) and on the other is directly responsible for the killing of thousands of Kurdish civilians in the late 1980's?

It can be argued whether this is a fair comparison or not, but my point is that true criticism of his doubtful political practices in the Arab world is rare to find these days.

And further: How can someone who used chemical weapons against his own people be trusted? Does this come from a kind of misguided alliance or some odd sense of Arab solidarity?

I am carefully following up on the news, yet I have to date not found anybody commenting on the quality of his leadership with regard to outstanding domestic issues in Iraq, as opposed to the hundreds of articles touching on the (il)legitimacy of joint American-British military action.

Another question: Does the reason for the mild reaction by Arab governments to the strikes and the postponement of an Arab summit lie in the fact, that not only have Arab states' (international) alliances shifted during the years following the Second Gulf war (or more likely after the rise of the Iron Curtain), but perhaps their overriding concern is maintaining stability in the region, which does not seem possible with Saddam Hussein in power?

I am not here to defend any U.S./British military actions against Iraqi civilians — I sharply condemn them. But I still think it is worth taking into consideration that the number of critics of the regime and opponents detained and killed in Iraqi prisons presumably exceeds the number of those who tragically lost their lives in the three day air strike against Iraq.

Denis Engelleder
 Post-graduate in political and Islamic studies
 Friedrich-Schiller University Germany
 (currently at Mu'tah University/Civil wing, Karak)

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Who wants to spend their life in a theme park?

By John Hannigan

These are 'fantasy cities' — tourism, entertainment and shopping all bundled together in a themed environment

IF ALL goes according to plan, sometime early in the next century a consortium of companies, led by Canada's Reichmann family (late of the Canary Wharf project in London's East End), will open the doors to "Destination Technodome." The \$450 million indoor entertainment and sports complex will be built on the site of a former air-force base on the northern edge of Toronto. The facilities will include a year-round, 150 million ski hill, a white-water rafting course, mountain-climbing walls, a Hollywood-inspired theme park and a 30-screen multiplex cinema. And that is in addition to a fabricated tropical rain-forest and a replica of Bourbon Street in New Orleans.

Destination Technodome is one of a new breed of entertainment centres intended to anchor the "fantasy cities" of the future, where tourism, entertainment and retail development are to be bundled together in a "themed" environment. Multimillion-dollar theme complexes are now being planned in Brussels, Barcelona, and Germany. In Florida, Disney has gone one step further and recreated an entire village designed, managed and protected by Disney, never to feel the threat of crime or a speck of dust. The projects in Britain are much smaller in scale, so far, but at least three British companies — Rank, Virgin and Tussauds — are involved internationally. With the troubles in Asia, American corporations are now expected to turn their attention even more to Europe.

These urban projects are being marketed as the saviours of declining downtown cores and stagnant suburban shopping centres. In places where the infrastructure is present and the demand is there, such as Florida and Las Vegas, they may be commercially successful. Elsewhere, as in Flint, Michigan, they have failed financially and dragged much-needed investment into non-productive dreams.

Critics, such as the U.S. writer Paul Goldberger, argue that this new urbanism of leisure will further encourage the privatisation of public places and the erosion of neighbourhood identities. Goldberger labels developments such as Destination Technodome "urbanoid environments." Like the pod-bred clones in the science fiction movie, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, they seem to be genuine, but something is not quite right.

What is missing is a sense of the serendipity, diversity and humanity of traditional street life.

The template for these quasi-cities is the Walt Disney version of the theme park, which has forever changed our image of what urban life should be. To appeal to its mainly white, middle-class suburban market, Disney crafted a simulated vision of the world which was both idealised and stripped bare of any significant risk, conflict or controversy. Whether in California, Tokyo or Florida, Disneyland visitors need not worry about tripping over garbage, being accused by panhandlers and "squeegie kids," or being mugged in the middle of the day. Instead, city life means sampling "old time" fudge or listening to a brass band in the town square.

Similarly, exotic foreign locales are rendered accessible and safe: no language or currency problems, stomach upsets or political instability. This "sanitised razzmatazz," as the New York Times architecture writer, Herbert Muschamp, calls it, can easily triumph over the real thing. Each year, during the March school break, several families from my wife's home town in rural Canada faithfully make a pilgrimage to the Disney resorts in Florida. After returning last winter, one of the duds observed (without irony): "I don't need to go to the South Pacific any more. I've already seen Tahiti at the Polynesian Village."

In adapting the Disney blueprint to the contemporary "theme park city," architects, developers and planners have borrowed and refined two key Disney strategies. To package the new entertainment destinations, they have embraced an architectural style which is designed to create an aura of fantasy, delight and well-being among onlookers.

Whereas shopfronts along traditional high streets are often diverse, and compete with one another visually, the retail establishments in fantasy cities are uniform and harmonious, suggesting consensus and contentment. But reassuring as it may be, Disney-inspired architecture is also blatantly commercial — a fusion of consumerism, entertainment and popular culture.

At "The Showcase Mall" in Las Vegas — a non-gambling entertainment complex on the famous "Strip" — the "World of Coca Cola" is fronted by the world's biggest Coke bottles, 100 feet high. Engineered to capitalise on the worldwide recognition of its brand name, the World of Coca-Cola contains a series of interactive exhibits which celebrate Coke bottles, jingles and memories, as well as a retail store which sells Coke-themed products. Urban culture here translates into the "Coca-Cola Salute to Folk Art," which displays the work of artists from 14 nations who have designed oversized Coke-bottle sculptures using an array of styles. Inside, the architectural highlight is the "Fantastic Fountain," featuring 866 Coke bottles which

At the World Edmonton Mall, the first shopping centre in the world to devote a major portion of its space to entertainment, security guards sit behind a glass wall in Central Dispatch, monitoring banks of closed-circuit televisions and computers which reach into every corner of the mall.

In Manhattan, the Disney company has led a drive to sanitise Times Square, formerly one of America's sleaziest prompts. Now, uniformed, radio-equipped public-safety officers employed by the Times Square Business Improvement District make twice-daily visits to the 45 locations of a computerised watch system to check citizen reports of public misbehaviour. The same no-nonsense approach is spreading to other areas of public life. In Los Angeles, transit authorities have introduced "bum-proof" benches which make sleeping impossible. And, as I found out first-hand in a library in Toronto's entertainment district, even a brief attempt at napping can earn a threat of ejection from the building's security staff.

The "Disneyfication" of our cities reflects a larger societal trend towards the "commodification" and "passportisation" of experience. Today, people buy and collect "leisure experiences" the same way they do consumer goods. And like the purchase of Ralph Lauren sweaters or Gaggia espresso machines, our choices are designed to increase our holdings of "cultural capital" — resources which can be used to give us an advantage in our dealings with others.

Fantasy cities have adopted this same "Panopticon" model. In designing Boston's Faneuil Hall, the prototypical "festival marketplace," developer James Rouse sent his project manager straight to Disney World to learn the most effective methods of maintenance and security. At Disney World in Florida, visitors' movements are discreetly but firmly directed by a combination of recorded voices, robots in human form and employees. To ensure that guests are directed away from or towards specific locations, Disney uses a combination of technology (monorails and other transportation systems) and physical barriers such as pools, fountains and flower gardens. An action as innocent as taking off your shoes will bring an instant intervention and reprimand. Efficient as it may be, this control system also acts to ensure that guests exclusively follow an itinerary laid out by the park's designers.

Fantasy cities have adopted this same "Panopticon" model. In designing Boston's Faneuil Hall, the prototypical "festival marketplace," developer James Rouse sent his project manager straight to Disney World to learn the most effective methods of maintenance and security.

act as "passports," proclaiming not only that you have been somewhere interesting but that you have consumed a highly rated experience. What is significant is not so much the role of consumption in helping to assert status and identity but the fact that consumption is increasingly programmed by giant entertainment corporations.

In the Disney theme parks, happy endings are guaranteed. But Cinderella may find it tougher sledding in the fantasy cities of the early 21st century. It seems unlikely that the economic benefits from large-scale megaprojects like festival marketplaces, designer sports arenas and high-technology entertainment centres will automatically spill over into the economically depressed neighbourhoods which frequently surround them.

Cleveland, Ohio, was once an industrial powerhouse before its decline in the 1960s. Today, in the U.S., it is celebrated as the exemplar of resurgent urban development. With a restored entertainment district (Playhouse Square), a newly minted sports complex (Gateway Centre) and the "Rock and Roll Hall of Fame" designed by superstar architect IM Pei, Cleveland is the American "comeback city" of the 1990s. Yet these glimmering tourist destinations have made little economic difference to the adjacent inner city where 40 per cent of Clevelanders remain trapped beneath the poverty line.

Tourists and middle-class day-trippers flock to these glass and plastic entertainment complexes where they feel reasonably safe, though few venture beyond to patronise local bars, restaurants and small shops. Atlantic City, New Jersey is a case in point. Since 1978, the year casinos were first introduced to the city, 100 of the city's 250 restaurants have closed and its population has declined by more than a tenth. Property values have declined and there has been little demand for new inner-city housing, manufacturing or warehouse space. Soon, a section of the one remaining stable, middle-class black neighbourhood in the city will be levelled to build a tunnel linking the Atlantic City Expressway to a new \$1.5 billion casino.

Not only are these fantasy entertainment zones expensive to build — Paramount's "Star Trek: The Experience" complex at the Las Vegas Hilton rings in at \$70 million — they also have a short consumer shelf-life. This means they can be undertaken only by a clutch of deep-pocketed global entertainment companies, like Disney, Universal, Sony, Warner Bros, Paramount and Rank, who own

enormous film libraries and gold-plated portfolios of recognisable cartoon and movie characters. Consequently, the line-up of attractions at most themed destinations is highly uniform with little local content. In these new leisure spaces, citizenship becomes equated with brand-name consumption, and the dream of a lively and creative public culture is crowded out by pre-packaged corporate entertainment.

Even holidays such as Christmas and Halloween are being co-opted by commercial "theming." In a recent news release, Madison Square Garden in New York City announced that the clothing company, Tommy Hilfiger, had agreed to sponsor "Madison Square Garden," a Halloween attraction which runs for 10 days every October. Designed to become a New York institution, much like the Christmas Spectacular at the Radio City Music Hall, there are plans to take the show across the country and into Canada.

Nor are the effects of this themed-entertainment juggernaut restricted to North America. Until the recent economic meltdown in Asia, American commercial culture was flourishing in Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and other nations in the Asia-Pacific region. Tokyo Disneyland, with an annual attendance of over 17 million, is the most popular theme park on earth. There is a Nike store in Shanghai. Hard Rock Cafés in Bangkok, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Taipei. And "Believe It or Not!" attractions in Korea, Thailand and Hong Kong. Universal Studios has begun construction of a \$1.6 billion entertainment park near Osaka, Japan, which will have areas themed to various American places (Hollywood, New York, San Francisco) and motion pictures (Jaws, Jurassic Park).

Australia, too, has embraced the entertainment model of urban development. The latest example is the \$66 million Sega World entertainment centre housed in a distinctive glass-coned building on the eastern side of Darling Harbour in Sydney. As the Japanese scholar, Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, has shrewdly observed, in the post-modern age, America has become another brand name — just like Chanel and Armani. The danger is that this seductive new world of themed and branded entertainment will be one where any sense of common purpose or true citizenship is swamped by "made-in-America" fantasies.

— The Independent

Global Village

Higher education in Africa

By John Gay Yoh

IT IS correctly held by many developmentalists that the level of development in a given country is measured by the quality and quantity of its higher education graduates. While this view is true, the trends followed, however, by the developing nations' higher educationalists, had revealed so far that, very little attention is being paid to this important developmental institution. In the Middle East and Asia for example, the general trend has been geared towards privatisation of universities. This has been the case in the Gulf region and in Southeast Asia during the last two decades. The move has been towards Americanisation of higher education. But what do we really mean by higher education? What are its characteristics? And is there anything called an "African university"?

As generations of intellectuals succeed one another in Africa, the logical question which deserves an answer is: What is the state of African universities today? It is true that most of African universities were founded in the period when most African countries emerged from Western colonialism, yet it is equally true that a few of them have been in existence quite longer. There is no doubt that like the rest of world educationalists, Africans do believe that universities and other higher education institutions belong to world community, and thus there is no need to create what some like to refer to as "an African university," as separate from British, American or French universities. Assuming that there is a need for an African university, and since intellectual, economic and political needs of African societies differ from the needs of European or American societies, it is plausible to emphasise that African universities have to undertake special programmes to serve African distinct interests, which no doubt differ in essence from Polish, Japanese or Turkish universities.

In the same way, inasmuch as the needs of a given society may differ from one part of Africa to another, so would, logically, the character of an African university vary from one African country to another. Each African nation has its own special characteristics. Its universities should reflect and indeed should bear the stamps of these special traits. With this distinction in mind, African universities should reflect the needs of the continent by providing African societies with skills that will enable them participate, both male and female, in the economic and social development of their region.

There are currently over 200 universities in sub-Saharan Africa. While this figure

suggests an optimistic view in favour of, and concern on the part of, African educationalists for the advancement of higher education, the main problem facing Africa in this field lies in that thousands of graduates compose 60 per cent of the unemployed in several countries in the continent. I think the trend should have been to produce graduates who are specially trained for employment with adequate managerial and technical skills to become self-employed. Moreover, the rapid increase in the number of universities in several African countries (about 20 universities were established in the Sudan between 1990 and 1997) is oft-times politically motivated, coupled with little attention to the significance of each university and inadequate arrangements for funding it. In the case of Nigeria and the Sudan, the need for the pursuit of excellence was jettisoned in favour of politicised approach of making promises in words and muddling through in practice. It is to be recalled that the current major British or American universities were community schools centuries ago before they were transformed into excellent academic centres.

The most neglected area of knowledge by most Africans, and to some extent Middle Easterners, is natural science where it is noticed that very few students enrol. This means that the continent is in a constant shortage of scientific and technical manpower. As a result, most African indigenous technical institutions often rely on engineers, biochemists and physicists from overseas. Thus, in terms of scientific manpower, Africa is the most human resource deficient continent in the world. After all, it is the legitimate right of every nation to develop institutions which will enable it to acquire and advance knowledge relevant to the challenges which will face its people in the future. And one such important institution is the university.

It is true that most African higher education centres are state-owned, hence most African governments are uneasy with the idea of a semi-autonomous status of universities. While several African higher education institutions strive for international standards, it seems that adherence to Africa's rich traditional knowledge will have to be incorporated in the curricula. A curriculum reform would necessitate more collaboration and inter-necessitate understanding, teaching and preferably the introduction of a bachelor degree that resembles in structural feature the American general degree, but is specific to African needs and conditions as stated earlier. It is to be emphasised that the new

African university curriculum should be science-oriented with strong practical component throughout the four or five years of under-graduate studies. Emphasis should also be put on the language of instruction. Where English or French are languages of instruction, students should take additional courses in the language before specialisation.

In several African universities, many students do not perform well because of language deficiency. In social sciences, the emphasis should be on familiarising students with issues of contemporary man and his social order. Inadequate understanding of language would certainly hinder the desired goal of providing a required scope and character of the disciplines of the social sciences. Natural sciences are offered at African universities to stimulate interest in science and to establish the interrelationship between scientific disciplines and to create awareness of the services of sciences to man and the effect of science to society. This is not enough. Laboratories at universities should be specialised and equipped. Ill-equipped laboratories will turn an African science student into a theoretician and a recipient of scientific knowledge and not an active inquisitive participant.

As for humanities, the focus should have been to analyse the basic aspects of culture — not only African culture — but also by exploring the creative action of man and philosophy, literature, arts, music of Islamic and Western worlds. Emphasis should be on African culture. The total advantage for higher education in Africa should not be described in terms of the numbers who complete their university studies. Hundreds of thousands have graduated from universities, and yet nothing much emerged from them. Those who dropped out from universities and colleges may yet prove useful and decent morally in their communities on the account of their experience. What is the benefit if the continent secures the quantity, by sacrificing the quality of the education, the ultimate goal of every educationalist? As often is the case, the role of vocational schools and junior colleges is taking in the surplus of those who did not make it through university. It is far more practical and better to establish more technical institutions than instituting several universities and colleges without budgets.

With the deterioration of national economies in most African countries and the growing discontent in university campuses, the governments' responses are often geared towards increasing control. It is noted that government's appointed "uni-

versity councils," set up to watch the university administration activities, often have little to do with the academic content of the university, rather more with sectional, tribal or individual grievances. The famous African student councils of the 1960s have become these days voluntary agencies, hence opening the doors for groups financed outside the campuses. That seems to suggest why we see that several African universities witnessed the rise of secret cults and gang warfare on campus. One should thus ask which comes first: over-centralisation and inefficiency of university managers or the failure of professors in Africa to deliver qualitative academic excellence?

Many people seem to favour the establishment of more private universities with funding from overseas at the expense of national higher education institutions. The main point to be highlighted is that where there have been a higher level of faculty scholarship, training and social commitment on the part of the educational planners, educational directions have been positive. Professors should be research-oriented and not simply recruited to teach. What needs to be done is to encourage indigenous research and teaching, with better understanding of historical forces which shape the growth and change in African societies.

Then comes the question of external aid to African university. Is aid most effective when it goes directly to the university or through government institutions or through the central government? Considering that assistance may vary in kind; i.e. funds for planning, travel grants or scholarships, should it be channelled through cooperative arrangements with foreign universities? African leaders and educationalists should know that they are training the future leaders of their countries. These men and women might not have interest in the subjects they study at university, but certainly they know why they are there and will wish to succeed by any means. The African higher education planners should therefore work out ways and means to inspire the African youth to respect African traditions, to show concern for the public good and to possess a special attachment for the nation — an essential ingredient of good citizenship — a useful element no nation can afford to do without. This should be the type of university education we should yearn for: a university for the Africans of tomorrow.

The writer is a Research Associate at the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies in Amman

Abuses by white health workers during apartheid

By David Briscoe
Associated Press

WHITE DOCTORS covered up torture of black patients, blacks were denied health care, and hospitals turned over untreated black patients directly to police in a series of abuses cited in a new U.S. report on South African apartheid.

The racism that infected the system was so deep that it will continue to cause "pain and injury" to the country's medical system unless concerted action is taken, says the report to be presented at a symposium Friday by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and Physicians for Human Rights.

The report on health care documents an era in which South Africans were served by two separate systems: "one a world-class medical care system for whites and one of filth and degradation that deprived many black people in South Africa of all human dignity." It cited rigid segregation of health facilities and grossly disproportionate spending on health care for whites.

The study was conducted at the request of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Its basic findings were presented earlier to the commission, which submitted a report on apartheid era health care to President Nelson Mandela.

A 10-member team conducted the evaluation of the system in South Africa with more than 100 interviews of health professionals, academics, government officials, representatives of community groups and others.

"While health professionals were deeply implicated in human rights abuses under apartheid," the report said, "The large majority of white health professionals benefited from a discriminatory system and either embraced the values and practices of apartheid or went along with them." In addition to denying health care to blacks, doctors and nurses are accused of issuing

false statements and forensic evaluations to protect police against charges of human rights violations.

The most famous case of medical abuse was the 1977 death in detention of black leader Stephen Biko. The South African Medical and Dental Council initially found no wrongdoing on the part of doctors in Biko's death, but two physicians who treated him eventually were reprimanded and one was stripped of his medical qualifications.

The report blasts the entire medical profession, issuing some of its harshest judgment on health professional organisations and their leadership for not using their insulated position to speak out on human rights and medical ethics.

"The conduct of the leaders of health professional organisations was in many respects the most egregious of all," it says.

Exceptions, the report says, were the National Medical and Dental Association, established by medical professionals to oppose apartheid and protect human rights, and individuals such as Dr. Wendy Orr, who it says spoke out against abuses.

"The report shows the variety of ways in which the culture and legal structure of apartheid continue to influence practices within the health sector," said Dr. Audrey Chapman of AAAS.

Chapman, co-editor of the report, commended the new South African government for beginning to address problems in the health professions, but she said the present system of government institutions is "ill-equipped to prevent abuses like those documented." The report recommends that health professionals in South Africa be required to comply with human rights standards in order to be licensed, calls for reform of professional organisations including removal of individuals who committed abuses, and appeals for training and monitoring of health professionals to protect human rights.

Analysts see trouble ahead for U.S. economy

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. economic momentum will flag this year with growth limited to around two per cent according to a survey of analysts in the Wall Street Journal Monday.

U.S. growth is expected to slow in the face of a stock market correction, weaker consumer spending and worsening financial conditions overseas.

The survey, based on predictions from 54 economists, foresees U.S. gross domestic product growing 2.1 per cent in the first quarter of 1999, 1.8 per cent in the second, two per cent in the third and 2.4 per cent in the fourth.

U.S. gross domestic product expanded at an annualized rate of 3.7 per cent in third quarter 1998, the most recent quarter for which official growth figures have been released.

In addition to a possible

downturn in shares, less active consumers and sluggish growth in export markets, the economy could also suffer from single-digit oil prices and anxiety over year-2000 computer problems.

While lower gasoline costs may be welcomed by U.S. motorists, the plunge in prices could aggravate financial crises in certain key countries, warned Regional Financial Associates economist Mark Zandi.

"Economies ranging from Mexico to Australia depend on revenues earned in oil and other commodity sales," he told the Wall Street Journal.

"With oil revenues falling quickly, so are the foreign reserves of those nations ... With dwindling reserves, these nations will face depreciating currencies and the risk of another round of global financial turmoil will

increase," Zandi said.

One economist, Edward Yardeni of Deutsche Bank Securities, warned that the United States could fall into recession this year because of disruptions to global commerce brought on by the year-2000 computer bug.

The recession could become apparent before 2000 "if the public becomes alarmed and takes precautions."

"If stock prices fall sharply in 1999, in anticipation of a recession in 2000, the resulting loss in confidence could cause consumers to retrench in 1999 and trigger a recession sooner as well," he said.

In other findings, 39 of the 54 analysts surveyed by the Wall Street Journal foresaw a downturn in the economy in 1999, with a 30 per cent chance the stock market would turn bearish in 1999.

EU economy splutters as its new currency shines

LONDON (R) — Europe might be basking in the glow of the successful launch of its single currency, but shadows are lengthening over its economy.

A string of grim reports this week has confirmed the severe damage inflicted on manufacturers by Asia's slump and reinforced expectations that the new-born European Central Bank will cut interest rates before the end of the quarter.

But with consumer spending proving resilient, many economists remain confident that the 11 members of the euro zone will pull out of the downturn within months, skirting recession, and enjoy a rebound in growth in the second half of the year.

"There is a cyclical downturn which is quite vicious, especially in the manufacturing sector, but that should be overcome sometime in the spring," Joachim Fels of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter in London.

Gordon Moffat, the Brussels-based director for Europe's steel producers' trade group, Eurofer, hopes the optimism is justified.

The steel industry, which employs more than 280,000 people in Europe, has borne the brunt of the economic crisis that engulfed Asia and Russia.

Asia, which used to take nearly a third of Europe's steel exports, bought 56 per cent less steel last year.

What's more, Asian steel-makers targeted Europe as an outlet for products unwanted at home and managed to boost their share of the market from four per cent to 25 per cent in 1998.

The result was a plunge in prices followed in the fourth quarter by a production cut of about 10 per cent that Moffat said could be repeated in 1999. As many as 40,000 European steel jobs could be at risk.

"We don't expect any rapid improvement," Moffat said. "Even if the situation stabilises in Asia this year, there won't be any pick up for several years to come," he added.

Nevertheless, the outlook is not entirely gloomy. European steel producers have filed anti-dumping suits against several countries that Moffat said should help slow import penetration.

"We don't expect much growth in demand in the first part of this year, but demand nevertheless should be relatively satisfactory and it should pick up in the second half if the economic situation improves," he said.

The plight of manufacturers was reflected on Monday in depressing purchasing managers' reports from Germany, Italy, Sweden and Britain.

Household spending has so far cushioned the industrial slowdown but economists say consumer confidence could take a knock if the gradual improvement in Europe's labour market is reversed.

Friday's December jobs report from Germany, which accounts for a third of Eurozone output, could be crucial, with economists braced for a sharp deterioration. Industrial output figures next Tuesday are also expected to show a sharp drop.

"There's lots of gloomy news to come in the next few weeks," said Ellen van der Gulik of U.S. investment bank JP Morgan, whose euro-zone economic activity indicator released on Monday showed overall output stagnating in November.

Morgan does not expect the region as a whole to suffer a quarter of negative growth and believes things will start gradually looking up towards the end of this quarter.

As in 1998, the international environment will be critical.

Although exports account for only about 10 per cent of the new Eurozone's GDP, German economists institute DIW said on Tuesday weak global demand would shave one percentage point off growth in 1999. The Berlin-based think tank is forecasting 1.9 per cent growth, down from 2.8 per cent last year.

Economists fret that flickering hopes of a recovery in Japan primed by government spending would be snuffed out if the yen's dizzying climb overnight were to continue.

And while there are signs that Asia might be touching bottom, van der Gulik said spreading weakness in Latin America — and Britain — was a worry.

"The external drag to growth in the euro area is not yet behind us," she said.

Clinton wants \$1,000 tax credit for elderly care

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton Monday proposed a \$1,000 tax credit for families taking care of elderly and disabled relatives as the centerpiece of a five-year, \$6.2 billion health care initiative.

Clinton, pushing ahead with a domestic agenda in spite of the persistent impeachment crisis, said the tax credit was needed to help defray the "staggering" cost of long-term care, which is rarely covered by private insurance or Medicare.

At a White House event with his wife Hillary, Clinton said the tax credit would help the elderly and

disabled live at home rather than in nursing homes, which can be more expensive.

He plans to propose it in his budget for the 2000 fiscal year that begins next Oct. 1.

"Our parents worked and saved and sacrificed for us in our youth. Adult children are now working, saving and sacrificing for their parents in old age. It is the cycle of life, and one we should recognise and reward," Clinton said.

The tax credit would provide financial support to about two million Americans, including 1.2 million older Americans. It would

cost \$5.5 billion over five years.

It would begin phasing out for couples making \$110,000 a year, with a cut-off at \$130,000 a year, and unmarried taxpayers making over \$75,000, with a cut-off at \$95,000.

Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala said the tax credit would be paid for by closing tax code loopholes and other revenue-raising measures. She gave no specifics, saying the funding for the plan would be part of the traditional negotiating process between the White House and Congress.

UAE reports negative growth

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) saw a 5.5 per cent drop in its gross domestic product (GDP) in 1998 due to plummeting oil prices, the federal government said Tuesday.

GDP fell from 180 billion dirhams (\$49 billion) in 1997 to 170 billion dirhams (\$46.3 billion) last year, Planning Minister Humaid bin Ahmad Al Moalla said, quoted by newspapers.

He said crude prices had dropped by 27 per cent over the year, undermining expected government revenues, 60 per cent of which come from oil sales.

The non-oil sector, meantime, grew 4.7 per cent over 1998, contributing 133 billion dirhams (\$36 billion) to GDP, as opposed to 127 billion dirhams (\$34 billion) in 1997.

The minister said he expected GDP to grow by 3.5 per cent in 1999.

reaching 176 billion dirhams (\$48 billion), because of "a slow improvement in oil prices," and continued growth in the non-oil sector.

Meanwhile, the UAE's population grew by 5.7 per cent in 1998 to reach 2.77 million, the minister said. Diplomats estimate that foreigners account for more than 80 per cent of the total.

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Exchange Rates Tuesday, 05-01-99 ACCESS 4646888											
CURRENCY	JORDAN DYNAR	SAUDI RIYAL	QATAR RIYAL	BAHRAIN DYNAR	OMAN RIYAL	KUWAIT DYNAR	LIBYAN DYNAR	EGYPT POUND	US DOLLAR	EURO	YEN
JORDAN DYNAR	1.0000	0.1688	0.1028	1.8780	1.8389	0.1993	2.3510	0.2077	0.7060		
SAUDI RIYAL	5.9766	1.0000	0.6121	9.9488	9.7418	1.0344	12.4546	1.1003	3.7507		
QATAR RIYAL	5.1879	0.8793	1.0000	9.7427	9.5400	1.0130	12.1968	1.0775	3.5730		
BAHRAIN DYNAR	0.5325	0.1005	0.1026	1.0000	0.9792	0.1042	1.2785	0.1128	0.3550		
OMAN RIYAL	0.5438	0.1027	0.1048	1.0000	0.9812	0.1042	1.2785	0.1128	0.3550		
KUWAIT DYNAR	5.1215	0.8688	0.8872	9.6180	9.4175	1.0000	12.0405	1.0637	3.6260		
LIBYAN DYNAR	0.4254	0.0803	0.0820	0.7988	0.7822	0.0831	1.0000	0.0883	0.3012		
EGYPT POUND	4.8145	0.9088	0.9280	9.0416	8.8535	0.9401	11.3189	1.0000	3.4087		
US DOLLAR	21.4931	4.0552	4.1410	40.3448	39.5055	4.1947	50.5084	4.4621	15.7010		
EURO	1.4124	0.2666	0.2723	2.6926	2.5973	0.2738	3.3267	0.2834	1.0000		
YEN	0.8533	0.1611	0.1645	1.6025	1.5692	0.1666	2.0092	0.1772	0.6043		
BRITISH POUND	2.3573	0.4492	0.4624	4.4271	4.3350	0.4603	5.5421	0.4898	1.6890		
FRANCE FRANC	9.287	1.6343	1.6720	3.6238	3.5485	0.3788	4.5366	0.4003	1.3628		
ITALY LIRA	7.9089	1.4929	1.5245	14.8528	14.5438	1.5443	18.5937	1.6427	5.5895		
JAPAN YEN	1.5892	0.2962	0.3025	2.9469	2.8656	0.3064	3.8892	0.3258	1.1110		
HOLLAND GUILDER	2.6571	0.5016	0.5122	4.8899	4.8091	0.5118	6.2467	0.5819	1.8812		
SWEDEN KRONA	11.3246	2.1377	2.1828	21.2874	20.8245	2.1712	26.8238	2.5322	8.0178		
CYPRUS POUND	23.3162	4.4018	4.4950	43.7931	42.8820	4.4532	54.8232	4.8435	16.5100		
FINLAND MARKKA	49.9082	9.2321	9.4274	91.8488	89.8379	9.5498	114.9826	10.1584	34.8270		
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	2.2806	0.4267	0.4388	4.2454	4.1571	0.4414	5.5147	0.4695	1.5008		
GREEK DRACHMA	3.8948	0.7352	0.7507	7.3143	7.1822	0.7505	9.1566	0.8080	2.7675		
CYPRUS POUND	2.6835	0.5066	0.5173	5.0398	4.9349	0.5240	6.3091	0.5274	1.6000		
NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR	16.8780	3.1482	3.2148	31.3210	30.8693	3.2585	39.2097	3.4541	11.8802		
CANADA DOLLAR	2.1568	0.4074	0.4157	4.2511	4.1598	0.4214	5.2483	0.4484	1.5000		
EURO	1.1949	0.2256	0.2303	2.2441	2.1974	0.2333	2.8093	0.2472	0.8450		

MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DYNAR											
CURRENCY	US DOLLAR	EURO	YEN	BRITISH POUND	FRANCE FRANC	ITALY LIRA	SPAIN PESSETA	NETHERLAND GUILDER	SWITZERLAND FRANC	AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR
US DOLLAR	1.0000	0.6562	0.9882	0.7330	0.1786	0.0001	0.5318	0.0589	1.1620		
EURO	0.6562	1.0000	0.9882	0.4422	0.1079	0.0001	0.3212	0.0363	0.7141		
YEN	0.9882	0.9882	1.0000	1.2216	0.2981	0.0001	0.8872	0.1080	1.0775		
BRITISH POUND	0.7330	0.4422	0.9882	1.0000	0.2440	0.0001	0.7262	0.0720	1.6148		
FRANCE FRANC	0.1786	0.1079	0.2981	0.2440	1.0000	0.0001	0.2978	0.0319	6.1868		
ITALY LIRA	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	1.0000	0.0001	0.0001	131.3200		
SPAIN PESSETA	111.1000	163.8827	88.5988	81.3205	19.8411	0.0001	59.0580	57.2625	16.5100		
NETHERLAND GUILDER	1.6820	2.7625	1.0000	1.2216	0.2981	0.0001	1.0000	11.3643	2.2286		
SWITZERLAND FRANC	1.3682	2.2513	0.8158	1.0000	0.2440	0.0001	1.2267	0.4821	48.5533		
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	5.5895	9.287	3.2585	3.6238	4.8899	0.0001	5.0401	2.9798	33.9158		
NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR	11.8802	18.812	6.8627	7.1822	9.1566	0.0001	12.0405	12.0405	12.0405		
FINLAND MARKKA	8.0178	13.2711	4.8040	8.8587	14.318	0.0001	10.1584	10.1584	10.1584		
ITALY LIRA	16.5100	27.3274	9.8922	12.0846	2.9485	0.0001	14.8025	6.7783	1.0000		
US DOLLAR	34.8270	57.3146	20.7472	25.3455	6.1839	0.0001	31.1674	18.4089	209.7335		
EURO	1.6035	2.6492	0.9590	1.1715	0.2858	0.0001	1.4406	0.8508	9.8942		
YEN	2.7575	4.3642	1.9522	2.9184	0.4925	0.0001	2.4620	1.4658	16.7023		
BRITISH POUND	1.9000	3.1482	1.1384	1.3507	0.3283	0.0001	1.7102	1.0000	11.5082		
FRANCE FRANC	11.8080	19.4448	7.0749	8.6430	2.1088	0.0001	10.6263	6.2768	71.5203		
ITALY LIRA	1.5284	2.5298	0.9158	1.1187	0.2730	0.0001	1.3757	0.8125	9.2574		
CANADA DOLLAR	0.8460	1.4003	0.5089	0.8193	0.1511	0.0001	0.7815	0.4487	5.1243		

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- Ring of bread
- Slangy
- affirmative
- Swan lady
- Residence
- Montreal player
- Writer Hunter
- Comic
- Anderson
- Mummified
- "Pretty Woman"
- co-star
- Epithet for Count Basie
- Rub out
- Charlie Brown's exclamation
- Extreme prefix
- Hibernation chamber
- Mata Hari, e.g.
- Promissory note
- "A Delicate Balance"
- playwright
- Stretch (out)
- Aroma
- Getz/Gilberto
- hit (with "The")
- Gardner and others
- Onassis to pals
- "Steppenwolf" author
- Actress Ryan
- Ceal substance
- lethargy
- New World nat.
- Debate
- Vocal inflection
- Tangy
- Jimmy Stewart
- western (with "The")
- Standard
- New York canal
- Corrupt
- Comic Johnson
- Watch kids
- V.P. Barkley
- Evaluation
- Fling
- College officers

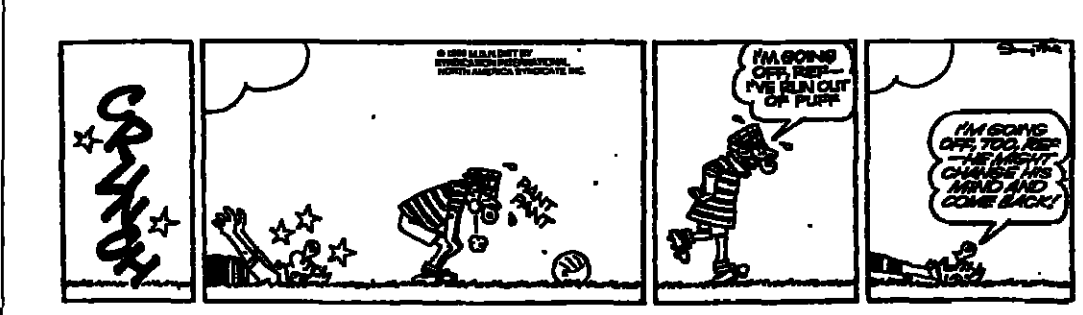
DOWN

- Pitcher's no-nos
- Seething
- Cheese like Edam
- Enlighten
- Lascivious look
- Sycophant
- Bring to bear
- Post-elation?
- Did gardening
- Within the rules
- Twilights, poetically
- Photographers' chambers
- Organic suffix
- Raw mineral
- Purchase
- Invisible emanations
- Dict. entry
- Get-up-and-go
- Old World lizard
- Lawrence — National Laboratory
- Boasters
- Goffer Ernie
- Radio static, in brief
- Undivided
- Sought office
- Sacred story set to music
- Now I get it
- Ring off
- Except that
- Black or Red
- Not fulfilled
- Leaves out
- Dining place
- One-called organism
- Up and about
- Part of R&P
- Highway or byway
- Country: abbr.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

DYPET

KROPE

LABDAL

FLYNUK

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here:

Yesterday's Jumbles: SWOON GULLY JURIST NAUSEA
Answer: Why the attorney visited the tailor FOR "LAW" SUITS

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Potash company boosts profit by 30%

THE ARAB Potash Company (APC) generated JD25 million net profit last year, 30 per cent more than the net profit posted in 1997. APC Chairman Saleh Irshaidat told Al Ra'i. He revealed that total production during 1998 amounted to 1.53 million tonnes, 7.9 per cent more than the 1997 output, and that sales totalled 1.52 million tonnes, 4.8 per cent higher than the sales recorded in the previous year.

Euro seen removing currency fluctuations with eleven countries in Europe

DEALINGS IN the euro will remove currency fluctuations with the eleven countries of the European Union (EU) which have good trade ties with Jordan. Finance Minister Michel Marto commented on the launch of the new European currency. "Dealing with a unified EU currency will be much easier than dealing with a big number of currencies," he said. Marto ruled out any negative effects from euro dealings. Central Bank Governor Ziyad Fariz did not rule out the possibility of settling payments with Europe in the euro currency. "The euro has become a currency just like other currencies and there is a possibility of it being in the reserve structure of hard currencies at the Central Bank," he said. Fariz explained that the euro is not different from similar other currencies such as the dollar or the yen and that shifting to repayment or collection of commercial payments in euro is accessible and valid.

Ammari expects Jordanian-European partnership agreement to be ratified next year

THE JORDANIAN-European partnership agreement did not enter the implementation stage at the beginning of this year as expected because the agreement was not ratified by all European parliaments and also by the Jordanian Parliament, said Planning Minister Nabil Ammari. He did not expect the agreement to be ratified before the start of the year 2000. Ammari announced that Jordan will receive between \$55 million and \$75 million this year in financial aid from the European Union to rehabilitate the national industry. Jordan received around \$125 million in aid last year. The minister indicated that although the partnership agreement was not ratified, there are many projects, financed by the European Union and the United States, providing technical assistance and consultations to improve the Jordanian industry and increase the value added to enable it to compete in both local and outside markets (Al Dustour).

Yen seen rising further against dollar, euro

TOKYO (R) — The yen may strengthen against both the dollar and the euro in the near term amid worries about the U.S. economy, rising Japanese long-term rates and speculation in euro-zone countries, dealers in Tokyo say. "Japanese traders are pessimistic about the outlook for the U.S. economy, and they think there is a chance that the dollar may fall further, or even collapse," Kazuo Takayama, chief manager of foreign exchange sales at Midland Bank in Tokyo, said in an interview with Reuters Television.

Eisuke Sakakibara, Japan's vice finance minister for international affairs, gave voice to market fears in an interview in Tuesday's edition of the Nihon Keizai newspaper, saying the U.S. economy looked "fairly bubble-like." "My utmost concern is high U.S. stock prices... A nation whose savings ratio is negative is consuming a lot. Such an economy is bound to slow once stock prices fall," the newspaper quoted Sakakibara as saying.

Sakakibara's comments and his refusal on Tuesday to comment on current foreign exchange levels helped trigger the dollar's fall to 110.70 yen, its lowest level since June 11, 1997, although it recovered to around 111.30 by late afternoon in Tokyo. The euro stood at 131.79/93 yen, compared with 132.30 yen in New York late on Monday and 130.80 early on Tuesday.

Market players interpreted Sakakibara's silence as tacit approval of current exchange rate levels. Unless Japanese monetary authorities intervene to stem the dollar's fall, dealers said, it could hit 105 yen before the end of March, especially since any slowdown in the U.S. economy could cause U.S.-Japan trade friction to boil over.

Trade friction between Japan and the United States is likely to be the most significant theme for the foreign exchange market in 1999, ahead of U.S. presidential elections next year, said Taro Ogi, manager of the Industrial Bank of Japan Ltd's international treasury department.

Jordanian banks extend \$21m loan to Palestinian firm

AMMAN (J.T.) — Nine Jordanian banks led by the Housing Bank, the second largest bank in the Kingdom, Monday reached a \$21 million syndicated bank loan agreement with the Palestinian Telecommunication Company, said Maher Haboush, from the Housing Bank.

"The deal comes as a part of bilateral efforts between Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to boost the economic cooperation between the two sides," said Zuhair Khouri, chairman of the board of directors of the Housing Bank headquarters.

The deal aims at helping the Palestinian Authority in its projects via branches of the Jordanian banks involved in the deal, said Khouri.

"The efforts of the Jordanian banks reflect the policy of Jordan's government in supporting our Palestine brothers through rebuilding their infrastructure, specially in the telecommunication area which is considered a cornerstone for globalisation," he said.

The deal will enable the PNA to upgrade telecommunications services in the West Bank as well as Gaza Strip. The deal will enable the Palestinian community to be updated on the world's latest technology, said Khouri.

Jordan signed a trade protocol with the Palestinian Authority in 1997.

Cambridge University worth more than \$3b

LONDON (AFP) — Cambridge University, one of the oldest and most prestigious in Britain, has a fortune of two billion pounds (\$3.3 billion, 2.8 billion euros), according to figures published Tuesday.

It is the first time in its 800-year history that the wealth of the institution has reached such a height, far ahead of its rival Oxford.

Its assets are divided into two: That held by the university itself and that owned by the famous Cambridge colleges, which function independently although under the aegis of the university.

The university's worth was valued at 1.049 billion pounds last year. It is made up principally of property — the sumptuous buildings used for classes — and an investment portfolio of 541.6 million pounds, fed by endowments from former students and benefactors.

The Cambridge colleges, for their part, have private assets of at least one billion pounds. None of this includes several artistic masterpieces, including a Titian, which are "priceless" according to the university.

In comparison, Oxford University, founded in the 12th century, estimates its value at a mere 492 million pounds. The assets of its colleges have not been evaluated.

Despite their wealth, both Cambridge and Oxford lag far behind the U.S. university of Harvard, which had an investment portfolio of \$11.7 billion at the end of 1998.

A.F.M. TRADE Tuesday, 05-01-99

ACCESS 4646868

Company	Open Price	Close Price	Change
BANKS			
ARAB BK	214.500	213.500	-0.47%
NTL BK	1.580	1.540	-1.28%
MIDDLE EAST BK	1.040	1.050	+0.96%
THE HOUSING BK	2.750	2.800	+1.82%
JO. KUWAIT BK	1.580	1.630	+3.16%
JO. GULF BK	0.700	0.740	+5.71%
JO. ISLAMIC BK	1.620	1.680	+3.70%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0.570	0.570	0.00%

BANKS INDEX 280.520 point = -0.06%

INSURANCE

JO. FRENCH INS	2.710	2.700	-0.37%
JO. GULF INS	1.690	1.770	+4.73%

INSURANCE INDEX 126.080 point = +0.36%

SERVICES

ELECTRIC POWER	1.630	1.710	+4.91%
PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	0.800	0.800	0.00%
AL-ZARQA FOR EDU	0.820	0.830	+1.22%
UNIFIED LAND TRANS	1.170	1.170	0.00%

SERVICES INDEX 110.940 point = +0.93%

INDUSTRY

CEMENT	3.350	3.520	+5.07%
PHOSPHATE	1.670	1.750	+4.79%
ARAB POTASH	2.800	2.800	0.00%
PETROLEUM REFINERY	10.300	10.480	+1.75%
THE IND. COMM. & AGRIC	1.150	1.110	-3.48%
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL	2.740	2.810	+2.56%
CERAMIC IND	1.100	1.100	0.00%
TOBACCO & CIGARET	1.240	1.240	0.00%
ARAB CHEMICAL DETER	7.000	7.050	+0.71%
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RAFIA	0.530	0.530	0.00%
DAR AL DAWA	5.200	5.400	+3.85%
MIDDLE EAST COMPLEX	0.550	0.550	0.00%
JO. STEEL	0.980	0.990	+1.02%
ARAB ALUMINIUM	1.850	1.870	+0.54%
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NTL CABLE	0.650	0.650	0.00%
SULPHO-CHEMICALS	0.390	0.380	-2.56%
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HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR JANUARY, WEDNESDAY 6, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) The moon in Virgo puts a spotlight on your work. Virgo is the sign of service and service-related occupations. You're at your best when you're taking care of others, and if you're not already in a career that demands it, today is an excellent day to find that kind of job. Check out the local possibilities.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Mercury, symbolising the mind, is going into Capricorn today. Now you get to think about travel, romance, adventure, excitement and trying something you've never done before. This condition is only going to be in effect for several weeks, so don't procrastinate. Today is an excellent time to get started.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Your ruling planet, Mercury, is going into Capricorn today. Capricorn is the sign of hard work, and for you, it also symbolises other people's money. So if you work hard during the next few weeks, you ought to be able to get more than that. At least they'll get to back you on a project you have in mind.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You could run into trouble today as you try to put a new skill into practice. You may have forgotten one of the subtle innuendoes. Part of the learning process comes through books, but the other part comes only through experience. It's possible you'll feel a little awkward today. Don't take it personally.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) An opportunity to take on more work could lead to a sizeable increase in income. This could be another job or simply doing more of the same. If you don't have a routine, you probably ought to put one in. The way to success right now is to churn out more of whatever is needed, as close as perfectly possible.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Your ruling planet, Mercury, is going into Capricorn today. This ought to be fun. Capricorn is in your solar fifth house of romance, games and children. Mercury means you'll be stronger in all those areas. With the sun also in Capricorn, your plans will be easily met. Don't spend much time lost in contemplation; action is required.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) There's a household project you've been considering but haven't quite had time for. Now, conditions are becoming more favourable for it. There will be a bit of a mess before things turn out the way you want them, but that's OK. Plan on spending today and tomorrow with the chaos; by Friday you'll have things whipped into shape.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Mercury, symbolising the mind, is going into Capricorn, which is in your solar third house of education. The sun is in Capricorn, too. That means you'll be even smarter than usual for the next several weeks. You'll be able to figure things out way ahead of time, and this could be quite profitable. Set a high goal. You're powerful.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Don't say you're going to do something unless you really intend to do it. Then you'd better follow through, because people are watching. There's something big ahead, and they're thinking about asking you to do it. It's a project you'd be perfect for, and you'd love it, too, so put on a good show today.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You're smart, and getting smarter. You're a person who learns through experience. In the next few days, the more you practice, the better you'll get at what you're doing. With the moon in Virgo right now, you won't settle for anything less than perfection. And you know what? You shouldn't, either.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Finances are still the topic of discussion in your life, either your money or money you share with other people. It could be loans, or sales you're interested in making, or sales you're interested in attending. At any rate, it's a good time to make a bargain and to get your financial affairs into order. Stop resisting and just get practical.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) If you're embroiled in an argument, perhaps it's time to bring in an objective opinion. This is a tried and true technique, and it's apt to work again. The problem you and your adversary have is that you're pushing each other buttons, and you're not listening. Both of you could listen to this third party, however, and that's the key to your success.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz

Credit Lyonnais plans to axe 3,000 jobs over three years

PARIS (AFP) — Troubled state-owned bank Credit Lyonnais said Tuesday it was planning to axe about 1,000 jobs a year over the next three years.

The bank, which is to be privatised this year, said the 1,000 jobs to be shed this year would include 564 jobs that had been due to go in 1998.

"The current payroll is around 30,000 and the aim is to reduce that to around 29,000 by the end of the year," the bank said. The move would bring the total job cuts since 1994 to almost 9,000.

France's La Tribune newspaper said Tuesday that the bank planned to axe some 1,500 jobs this year, including the 564 held over from 1998.

The government is to privatise the bank before the end of October, a condition set by the European Commission for approving a third massive state aid plan for Lyonnais last year.

The Commission has estimated the bank's total cost to the state at about 150 billion francs (22.86 billion euros) through a combination of losses on property investment, bad management and skulduggery.

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World No. 1 Lindsay Davenport and Pete Sampras

Sampras, Davenport pick up ITF World Championships

LONDON (AP) — Americans Pete Sampras and Lindsay Davenport were named Tuesday as the International Tennis Federation World Champions.

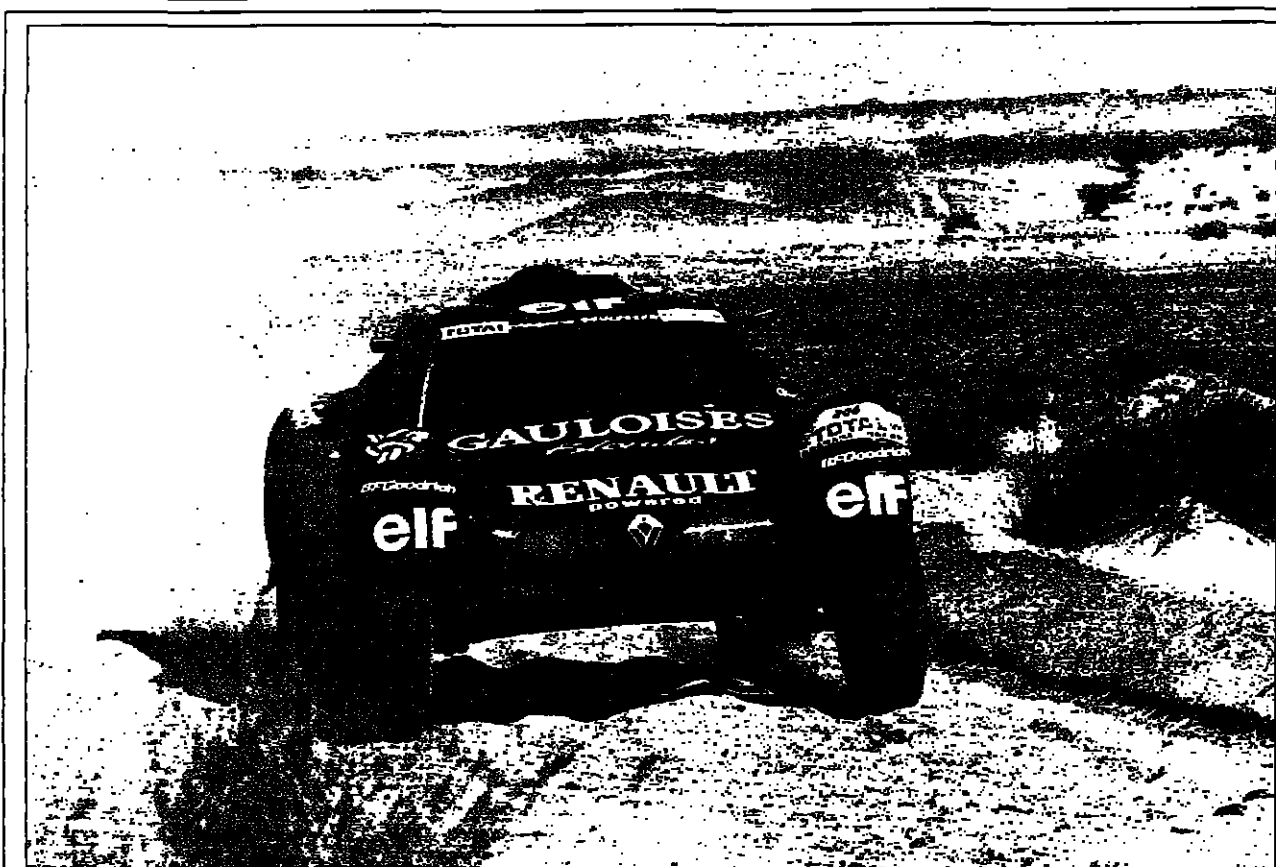
Sampras, who finished the season as world No. 1 for a record-sixth consecutive year, also won the ITF award for a sixth-straight time.

Davenport, who finished the season ranked No. 1 and ended the 80-week reign of Martina Hingis, is a first-time winner of the ITF singles award.

The ITF men's double prize went to the Dutch pair of

Jacco Eltingh and Paul Haarhuis, both of the Netherlands. The women's winners were Davenport and Natasha Zvereva.

The wheelchair World Championships award was won by David Hall and Daniela Di Toro, both of Australia. The award for juniors went to Roger Federer of Switzerland and Jelena Dokic of Australia.



Spanish driver Jose Maria Servia and co-driver Thierry Delli-Zotti from Switzerland in their Schlesser-Renault Buggy during the 4th stage of the Granada-Dakar rally between Tan-Tan, Morocco, and Bir Mogrein, Mauritania. The team is second in the overall standings (AP photo)

Reeves readies himself and team for NFL playoffs

SUWANEE, Georgia (AP) — Three weeks after undergoing heart surgery, Dan Reeves sounds like he'll be back with the Atlanta Falcons for the playoffs.

The NFL's coach of the year received a clean bill of health after an examination Monday morning, then spent the rest of the day huddled with his assistants, working on a game plan for Saturday's divisional game against the San Francisco 49ers.

Reeves broke away from the meetings long enough to speak by telephone on his weekly radio show.

"I had a great day," Reeves said on WGST. "My energy level is getting better and better. ...

Hopefully, I will get a good night's rest and be ready to go (today). I have a chance to be on the sidelines Saturday. We'll just have to wait and how it goes during practice this week."

Reeves, who is taking blood thinner medication, may have to work out of the press box coaching booth because of all the bodies flying around on the sidelines.

But he has resumed driving himself to the Falcons' suburban training complex. Last week, doctors instructed him to use a driver and sit in the backseat, lessening the chance of injury if there was a wreck.

"Knowing coach Reeves, I would specu-

late that he'll probably be in the booth somewhere," Anderson said. "I don't think he'll be on the sideline because of the risk."

Defensive coordinator Rich Brooks has been the acting head coach since Reeves underwent quadruple bypass surgery on Dec. 14 and missed the final two games of the regular season.

"I don't know exactly what Dan will be involved in this week," Brooks said. "Last week, he just told me to keep doing what I'm doing. I guess that's what I'll do until he tells me otherwise."

Reeves and the rest of his NFC West champion Falcons got a chance to

relax over weekend and await their opponent for the first postseason contest in Atlanta since 1980.

The answer didn't come until Sunday evening, when Terrell Owens grabbed a 25-yard touchdown pass with three seconds remaining, giving the San Francisco 49ers a 30-27 victory over the Green Bay Packers.

"I think we have the advantage by the fact that we were able to watch and rest up this week-end," All Pro running back Jamal Anderson said. "I didn't do anything. I left my house maybe three times. I just rested."

The 49ers, who finished

Black fears Rafter-Philippoussis combination

ADELAIDE (AFP) — Byron Black believes Zimbabwe will be hard-pressed to beat Australia even with home advantage in their Davis Cup rematch in April if Pat Rafter and Mark Philippoussis team up again.

Black said the 3-2 first round victory he and younger brother Wayne inflicted on Australia last April was Zimbabwe's best ever result.

"It's going to be very tough for us to repeat that, especially if Philippoussis plays," Black said after reaching the second round of the Australian men's hardcourt championships with a three-set win over American Vincent Spadea.

"But we are playing at home so we will be feeling confident, it just depends on how your guys play I guess."

The Zimbabweans took advantage of a troubled Australian team last April when a virus-stricken Pat Rafter was forced to withdraw from his second singles match after losing the first.

Philippoussis had made himself unavailable after claiming Cup captain John Newcombe and coach Tony Roche had let him down when he was struggling in 1997. But he then turned up to watch the tie to the obvious annoyance of some team members.

Black notched up a win against Rafter and also beat Jason Stoltenberg to clinch the Davis Cup victory.

This year, however, Philippoussis has committed himself to playing for Australia in the first round at least.

"Black said," a covered medium-pace hard court was being prepared for the Zimbabwe match, with the 5,000-capacity stadium expected to be sold out.

He said he and Wayne felt the pressure of being Zimbabwe's only representatives — they play both singles and doubles in the Davis Cup — because they had always to be fit, but they relished the challenge.

"There's a lot more pressure there, it means a lot more playing for your country obviously so guys feel a bit tight and if we've been in that situation before, I think it helps if we have had a lot of matches," he said.

Union gives NBA its 'final offer' as deadline looms

NEW YORK (AFP) — National Basketball Association commissioner David Stern received a "final" union proposal from executive director Billy Hunter here Monday in last-ditch talks aimed at saving the season.

In an hour-long meeting at a mid-town hotel, Hunter and union president Patrick Ewing responded to the league's "final" proposal, submitted by Stern one week ago.

As the squabble between billionaire owners and millionaire players continued, time ticked away on the final chance to salvage some portion of an NBA season before Thursday's owner-imposed deadline for a deal.

Stern said he will suggest Thursday at an owners' meeting here that the season be wiped out unless a deal is completed to end the owner-imposed lockout, now in its 188th day.

No labour fight in North American sports history has wiped out an entire season, although hockey and American football have been to the brink before last-second deals and baseball lost the 1994 World Series.

Stern was back to

work after a two-week vacation in Aspen, Colorado. The union plans to have its 19-member negotiating committee here by Tuesday morning for final talks.

A sports empire projected at \$2 billion has already suffered major damage from fan anger and apathy as more than two months of games have been missed.

If a deal is reached in the next few days, a season of about 50 games could begin February 1 after free agent signings and training camps.

Teams would play up to three nights in a row before full playoffs start in May and likely finish in early July.

The NBA gave the union its "final" proposal December 27 but the negotiating committee voted unanimously not to have the full 400-player membership vote upon the plan.

Hunter said he wanted to give Stern the union's proposal on New Year's Eve but would not after the league said there was no need for more discussion because their last offer had been rejected.

The union reportedly has countered with a proposal that includes a \$15 million annual salary cap on players

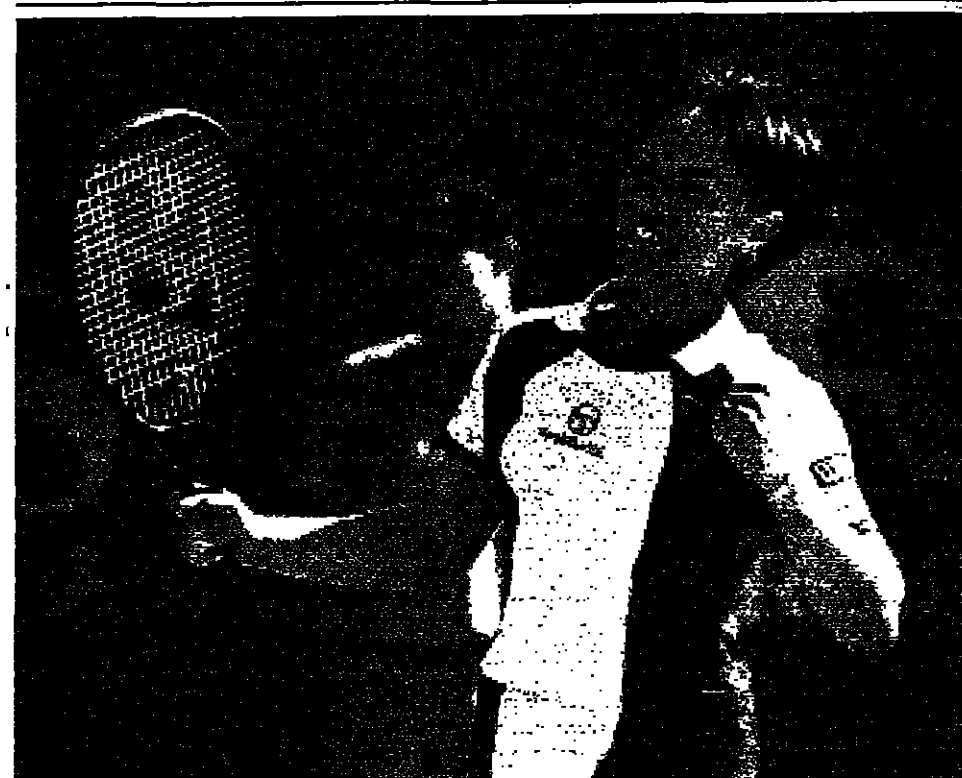
who have been in the NBA for a decade or more.

But the sides remain far apart on what amount of basketball-related income players will receive over the final three years of a projected six-year deal.

The league's last offer gives the union 53 per cent, 53.5 per cent and 54 per cent of the total income. The union seeks 56, 56 and 57 per cent, reaching in the final year the same level they enjoyed last season.

With each percentage point representing about \$20 million, the \$60 million difference might prove to be too much for negotiating to overcome.

The dispute has already sent European-born NBA standouts Vlade Divac and Arvydas Sabonis into deals with European clubs and top-draft pick Michael Olowokandi of Nigeria signed with an Italian team Monday. All three deals allow players an escape clause if an NBA season is conducted.



Martina Hingis

Hingis out to claim back No. 1 spot

PERTH (AFP) — Martina Hingis made a sizzling start to her new year campaign to reclaim the World No. 1 spot back from Lindsay Davenport at the Hopman Cup on Tuesday.

But the Swiss teenager could not stop her country being beaten 2-1 by defending champions Karol Kucera and Karina Habsudova of the Slovak Republic in the first round tie of the \$550,000 mixed team tournament.

Hingis, the women's World No. 2, beat Habsudova 6-0, 6-3 in only 42 minutes before Kucera beat Heuberger 5-7, 6-4, 6-3 in the men's singles to square the tie.

Kucera and Habsudova beat Heuberger and Hingis 6-4, 6-0 in the crucial mixed doubles.

But Hingis was delighted with the start of her campaign to regain the top spot from America's Davenport, who she will play later this week when the Swiss play the U.S. duo.

The Swiss teenager said being No. 1 again was her main aim for this year.

"I am thrilled with my start here," Hingis

said. "I felt very well and thought I played some great tennis in the first set."

"I took a month off before Christmas, and the result has been good."

Habsudova, 25, with a world ranking of 82nd, was completely outclassed by her young opponent.

Raoux levels France's clash against South Africa

South Africa's Amanda Coetzer beat France's Sandrine Testud 7-6 (7/5), 6-1 at the \$550,000 Hopman Cup tennis mixed teams tournament here on Tuesday.

But Guillaume Raoux beat Wayne Ferreira 6-3, 7-5 in 85 minutes to level the first-round match.

Testud's game fell apart in the second set after she had fought strongly before losing the opening set in an hour.

The first round match was to be decided by the mixed doubles.

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	Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	HEAT Show: 10:00			
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Croatian tennis player Goran Ivanisevic returns a backhand to his Spanish opponent Francisco Clavet, late in Doha, during the first round of the Doha Tennis tournament. Ivanisevic beat Clavet in three sets: 6-3, 6-7 (1/7), 6-4, to qualify to the second round (AFP photo)

Blatter, Samaranch meet facing differences of doping, World Cup

GENEVA (AP) — Seemingly further apart than ever on the issue of doping and facing a possible clash between the two organizations, the leaders of world soccer and the Olympic movement hold a crucial summit meeting today.

Meeting of FIFA president Sepp Blatter and IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch is expected to center on the opposition to the IOC's recommended minimum two-year suspension for athletes found guilty of using performance-enhancing drugs.

Blatter's dramatic proposal, floated Sunday, to hold the World Cup every two years has raised the possibility of a collision between soccer's premier competition and the summer Olympics.

A biennial World Cup would mean the tournament being held in Olympic years, setting the stage for scheduling conflicts and a fight for sponsorship and television rights. Blatter said the change would likely be introduced in 2008. FIFA says a special, smaller World Cup would likely be held in 2004 to mark its centenary.

A denies the summit meeting at its Zurich headquarters, where Samaranch will be accompanied by a high-level IOC delegation, will see a clash of incompatible views. "I'd like to categorically refute this point of view," spokesman Andreas Herren said. "It can only be good that major organizations are talking to each other."

Blatter said soccer is "not at all" finished as an Olympic sport if the World Cup goes to a two-year cycle. But he stressed the Olympic competition would remain restricted mostly to players 23 and under.

The IOC and FIFA, probably the two most powerful bodies in international sport, have been at odds over the drug problem for some time.

The IOC wants all Olympic sports federations to apply common rules and penalties, including a minimum two-year suspension for athletes using steroids and other major performance-enhancing drugs.

If federations refuse to apply the rule, they risk being dropped from the Olympic programme.

Soccer, cycling and tennis have expressed reservations to the Olympic resolution, adopted in November. The other 32 Olympic federations have approved it.

FIFA officials questioned whether the penalty was enforceable and argued that not all drugs on the IOC's banned list have performance-enhancing qualities for soccer players.

Samaranch has said he is confident that FIFA will sign up to the agreement before the IOC's Feb. 2-4 world anti-doping summit in Lausanne, Switzerland.

But FIFA's medical chief appeared to dash those hopes Monday, saying that "FIFA will never change its opinion on this."

"Even if FIFA stands alone, it is old and big enough to take care of itself," medical committee chairman Michel D'Hooghe said.

FIFA's ruling executive committee last month agreed in principle to introduce random out-of-competition drug tests for players, considered the most effective way of catching drug cheats. But it didn't decide on when and how the controls would take place.

The structure of the Olympic soccer tournament is another contentious issue on Wednesday's agenda.

FIFA has always made sure that its World Cup, which started in 1930, would not be overshadowed by an Olympic soccer tournament.

Despite a request from Samaranch, the soccer body said in November it wouldn't expand a slight concession made in 1996 allowing teams to field three players over 23.

Samaranch hoped FIFA would allow teams to field five players over 23 at the 2000 Sydney Games.

But that implied no lack of commitment to the competition on FIFA's part, Herren said.

"At the under-23 level, the football tournaments have proved very attractive," he said.

IOC sports director Gilbert Felli said the issue remains open for discussion Wednesday.

The two sports bodies will also discuss the creation of a specialized soccer arbitration tribunal within the IOC-backed Court of Arbitration for Sport.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Olympic champ withdraws from Beijing final

BEIJING (AFP) — Olympic champion Claudia Poll has withdrawn from Tuesday's 200 metres women's freestyle final in the Beijing leg of the short-course World Cup, organisers said. The Costa Rican qualified in first position in the morning heats with a time of 1min 59.75secs. Organisers gave no reason for Poll's pull-out. She won the 200m freestyle gold medal at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

Korda enters London event

LONDON (AP) — Petr Korda has entered next month's Guardian Direct Cup in London for his first tournament in Britain since testing positive for steroids at last year's Wimbledon. The Czech player, who defends his Australian Open title this month, had his prize money and ATP Tour points taken away after testing positive during last summer's championship at the All England club. But the International Tennis Federation took no further action after accepting Korda's case that he had no idea how the prohibited drug, nandrolone metabolites, got into his system. The field for the Feb. 22-28 indoor event at Battersea Park also includes former Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek, former U.S. Open and Wimbledon runner-up Cedric Pioline and Greg Rusedski, who has risen to No. 9 in the world. A wild card has also been left open for veteran John McEnroe, who has dominated the Seniors tour and has offered himself as a doubles player for the U.S. Davis Cup team.

Giovanni threatens walkout

BARCELONA (AFP) — Barcelona's Brazilian midfielder Giovanni on Tuesday threatened to quit the Spanish First Division club after falling out of favour with coach Louis Van Gaal. The final straw came when Van Gaal, who has preferred Luis Figo and Rivaldo in recent matches, did not even give him a run-out during the 7-1 win over Alaves on Sunday after the match had been won. Giovanni said: "I can only remain patient up to a certain point and if this situation continues I will have to look for another club."

UEFA chief slams biennial World Cup plan

GENEVA (AFP) — UEFA general secretary Gerhard Aigner on Tuesday expressed deep misgivings about the plan to turn the World Cup into a biennial event. Aigner told Swiss daily paper Le Matin that the plan could have financial repercussions for the game and would not be in the best interests of television viewers. Aigner said: "Economically the market is not inexhaustible and we can not eternally expand hoping to multiply the profits. In this affair, the big loser seems to me to be the viewer, who FIFA have lost sight of. We can not deliberate over football's future as if we were playing a game of cards." The UEFA number two also took an apparent swipe at FIFA president Sepp Blatter, who first aired the possibility of a biennial World Cup, when he said he was worried "about this tendency to want to impose a project without even consulting UEFA."

Chang sets sights on No.1 spot

ADELAIDE (Agencies) — Former World No. 1 Michael Chang returned from an injury-plagued season with a dogged first-round victory in the Australian men's hardcourt here Tuesday — then set some ambitious goals for the rest of his career.

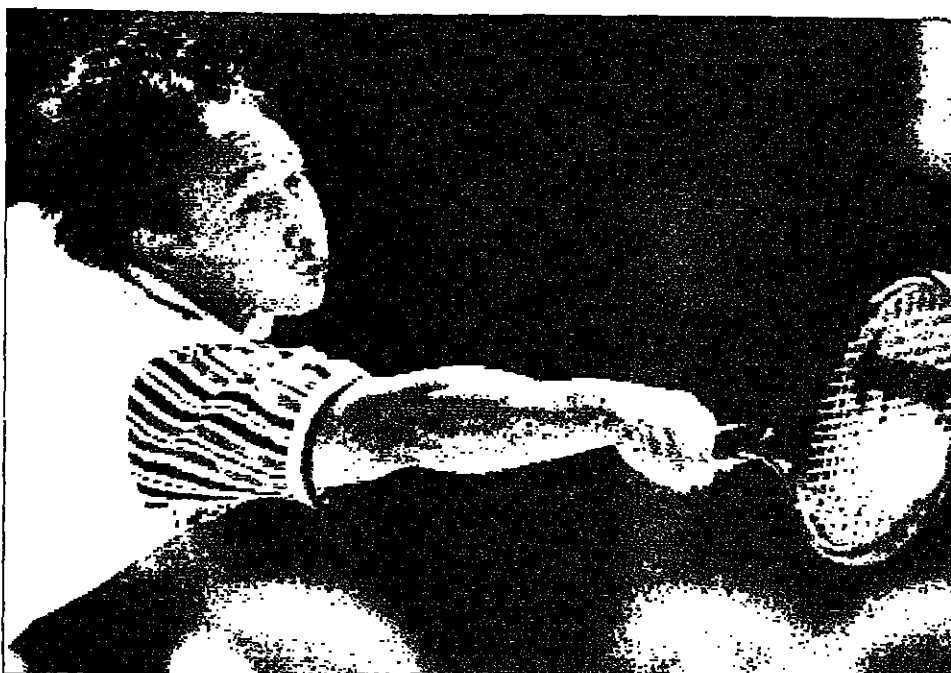
The sixth-seeded American took three sets to eliminate French qualifier Sebastien Grosjean 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 in a drawn-out affair as the late-afternoon temperature hovered around 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

The 1989 French Open winner then said his four remaining tennis goals were rising to the No. 1 position — a spot he nearly claimed in 1996 — and winning the three grand slam titles he has not yet won.

He also quashed suggestions he might quit the tour after a devastating 1998, in which knee and wrist injuries kept him out of the top 20 for the first time since his debut year in 1988.

"I think last year was a kind of unfortunate year but I've learned a lot," said Chang, who became the youngest player to win a grand slam with his 1989 French Open win.

"I think sometimes people forget that I'm only 26 years old. I was looking in



Michael Chang

the paper and Pat Rafter is 26, hey, the same age. "Everyone says Pat's best tennis is still ahead of him. I feel like my best tennis is still ahead of me... as far as calling it quits, it's never crossed my mind unless somebody's asked me."

His win over Grosjean sets him up for a second-round meeting with Australian Scott Draper Wednesday night.

Zimbabwean Davis Cup star Byron Black advanced into the second round by

defeating American Vincent Spadea 1-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-2.

The fifth seed said he was relying on his fitness to wear down Spadea, who dictated play in the first set but wilted in the second and third, particularly after the gruelling tie-break.

"I have always been a slow starter and I tried to get off to a good start today but it just didn't really go my way," Black said.

"Vince was taking the ball early and rushing me a little bit and I didn't have my

groundstrokes like I normally do.

"I knew that I could outlast Vince if it came down to fitness which I think it did a bit, it's really hot out there."

Australian Pat Rafter returned from a two-month knee injury layoff to beat Japanese qualifier Takao Suzuki 6-3, 6-0 Tuesday at the Australian men's hardcourt tennis championships.

Rafter broke Suzuki's serve for the first time in the eighth game of the opening

set then powered three unreturnable serves and a straightforward serve-volley point to take the set with a love game.

Steadily gaining in confidence and backed by a large crowd at Memorial Drive, the repeat U.S. Open winner immediately broke Suzuki in the second set en route to an easy set and match win.

Rafter said after the match it could easily have gone the other way had Suzuki been able to capitalise on early break opportunities.

"The beginning was really important. I could have been down a set and a break if you look at the chances he had," Rafter said.

"I took every chance I had and he didn't take them at all."

Maybe he got a little bit tight on those points and then I found a way to return his serve."

American former World No. 1 Jim Courier made an early exit from the tournament, losing in straight sets 7-5, 6-3 to Czech Slava Dosedel.

Courier, whose ranking tumbled to 75 by the end of 1998, never looked like getting into the match and was unable to threaten the consistent Dosedel on his service games, gaining only one break point in the two sets.

Determined Williams sisters out to dominate in 1999

HONG KONG (AFP) — Tennis sisters Venus and Serena Williams are adamant 1999 is going to be their year as they start their season with an exhibition event here Thursday.

The talented Florida-based American duo believe they are ready to make their mark in the four major tournaments, starting with this month's Australian Open.

"I think last year I did

more losing than I did winning," said world number five Venus, who holds the world record for the fastest women's serve at 125mph.

"That's a trend that I have to change this year if I want to have a chance in the majors. I feel I'm ready to be competitive," the 18-year-old said. "I'm not going to just be playing tournaments for the sake of it. I'm going to be there to

compete hard."

Williams' three career titles all came in 1998, but her dream of a first major ended in the semi-finals of the U.S. Open when she was beaten by World No. 1 Lindsay Davenport.

"Last year I had a couple of opportunities but they went by," she said. "But if I get the chances this year I'm going to take them. I'm confident about Australia."

Sister Serena, 17 years old and ranked 20th in the world, is anxious to move out of the shadow of her higher ranked sibling and has already tasted victory at the majors with mixed doubles triumphs at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open in 1998.

"That gave me the confidence. I feel I'm getting stronger all the time and I'm just feeling extremely good right now," she said.

"I really think this is going to be my year and that I can break through into the top level... I thank my sister for some of that. She's been an inspiration."

Also taking part in the eight-player exhibition event at Hong Kong's Victoria Park, starting here Thursday, are Germany's Steffi Graf and Russia's Anna Kournikova.

Sailor admits blunder in Around Alone race

AUCKLAND (AFP) — English sailor Mike Golding admitted Tuesday he made a critical navigation error which saw his Around Alone yacht crash into a sandbar just off the coast of New Zealand. Golding said the drama occurred because he was posing for the sponsor's helicopter overhead.

"It is as clear as day. I made a mistake," he told a press conference.

"I can't fully explain why I made such a stupid mistake," Golding's Team Group 4 was Friday leading in the Around Alone around-the-world yacht when it was coming around Cape Reinga at the top of New Zealand in clear, calm weather.

The yacht was towed into Auckland Tuesday with Golding admitting to he was in tears as he came across the finishing line, knowing he was out of the event and may not make the third stage start on February 6.

In sailing circles the incident has caused amusement because the area — the meeting point of the Pacific Ocean and the Tasman Sea — is known as an area of clashing tides.

He was leading the race by over a day at that point and as he went around Cape Reinga a helicopter came overhead and began filming him for the sponsor.

"I was not posing for the helicopter," he said.

He said it was natural that he kept up speed.

The helicopter had nothing to do with it.

"The fact of the matter is the responsibility of the boat and navigation is profoundly and squarely in my ball court."

Golding said his key error had been in laying down his way-points on the wrong side of Cape Reinga. He had planned his approach rather than his exit.

"The reason I did that, I

wanted to be able to see visually where I was and what the wind was doing and to be able to make the choice of whether to cut close or go away from the coast. I should have amended that way-point given the point of sail I was on."

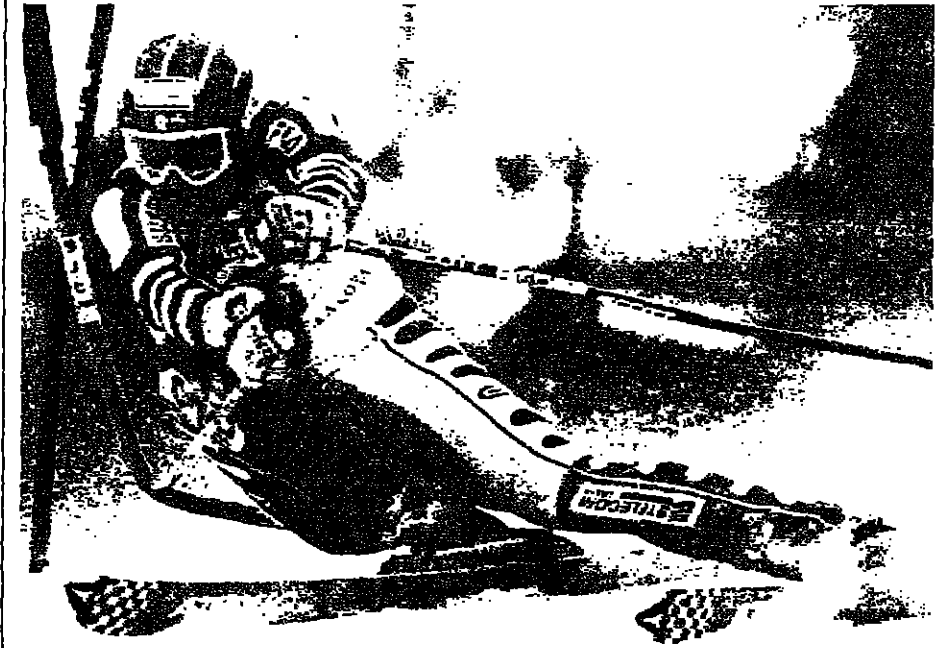
What had happened, he said, was a "most unexpected thing."

He said his primary geo-stationary positioning system was not working and he was using a secondary system. Thus he had planned carefully ahead and thought he was in good shape, especially as he had a good lead.

The Pilot Book had warned he would be in breaking seas and had been for an hour before the accident.

His plotting showed he was over two nautical miles (3.7 kilometres) from the coast at a point where the Pilot Book recommended a clearance of 1.75 miles (3.2 kilometres).

But the tide was pushing in from one side and he believed he was lee-bowing (pushed by the tide) and with his electronics he had no course-over-the-ground immediately available to him.



Patrick Holzer of Italy passes by a gate during the first round of the Giant Slalom World Cup event in Kranjska Gora. Holzer won the race by clocking a time of 2 minutes 14.91 seconds (Reuters photo)

JORDAN TIMES
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Lecture at Randat Al-Muraf Schools & College

A lecture discussing the history and aspects of Mathematics in the real world will be held by Dr. Gover, a professor of Mathematics representing the University of Bradford, UK, one of the leading Northern Consortium Universities. It will take place in the central library of the college on Thursday the 7th of January from 11:00 13:00 P.M.

Seating arrangements strictly by booking through the Public Relations office.

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Yemen kidnap survivor says government did right thing

Agencies

AN AUSTRALIAN survivor of the Yemen kidnap drama said Tuesday more lives could have been lost if government soldiers had not tried to rescue the tourists.

Four people, including Australian Andrew Thirk, were killed during a bloody shoot-out when Yemeni security forces raided the hideout of Islamic militants who had taken the 16-member tour group and its four drivers hostage last week.

Catherine Spence, 33, said any blame for the ordeal could only be levelled at the kidnappers who had put her group in that position.

"Had different action been taken I cannot begin to guess whether the result would have been 20 dead or 20 living hostages," she said in a written statement released here.

"Statements made later by our drivers confirm that the terrorists were shouting to the army that they intended to shoot us."

Much criticism has been made about the soldiers' actions amid claims that the government had told "complete and utter lies" to try and cover-up the truth of the botched rescue effort.

Spence said it had been confirmed that the army had

attempted negotiation with the kidnappers after surrounding their hideout.

"They did not begin their 'assault' until after they had been spotted by the terrorists who opened fire on them," she said.

"I have no dispute with the Yemeni army's statement that once the shooting began they believed they had no choice but to act as quickly as possible."

"Blame, if blame must be assigned, can lie only with those who took us hostage. Regardless of whose bullets hit anyone it was the terrorists who put us in that position."

Spence returned to her parents' Sydney home from London on Sunday.

Her father Ian said at the weekend that his daughter had been questioned by "Yemeni generals" for seven hours before being allowed to leave the Arab state.

The shoot-out between security forces and the kidnappers resulted in the deaths of Thirk as well as three Britons and the wounding of an American and a Briton.

It was the first time Islamic militants have kidnapped foreigners in Yemen.

Yemeni police said the kidnappers were Arab veterans of the war to push Soviet forces out of Afghanistan and had

demanding the release of their leader who was arrested after a clash with security forces early last month.

Islamic leaders, meanwhile, warned that U.S. and British investigators should not be allowed to interfere in an inquiry into the deaths of four hostages at the hands of Yemeni fundamentalists.

"We refuse any interference by foreigners in our legal system, whether they are from Britain, the United States or anywhere else," said Abdul Majid Zandani, a senior figure in Al Islah party.

"It is an attack on our sovereignty," he told the Arabic language daily Al Hayat in an interview published Tuesday.

A U.S. and British role in the investigation implied that Yemen was still "under tutelage and does not have people competent enough to do the job," Zandani added.

"If we open this door to foreigners they will push it wider open and could send us observers to monitor our administration and finances," he told the London-based newspaper.

London, the colonial power in former South Yemen until 1967, sent four men from Scotland Yard, three of them anti-terrorist experts, who began their work on Saturday.



U.S. President Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary bid farewell to Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor after the two leaders held talks on Tuesday at the White House in Washington (AFP photo)

King Hussein, Clinton discuss Mideast peace, bilateral ties

(Continued from page 1)

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright showed during her last visit to Jordan in December that the administration wants to increase the U.S. annual aid to Jordan, which currently stands at \$225 million by an additional amount of \$200 million over the next five years to be allocated for security aid.

After the conclusion of the official meeting, King

Hussein and President Clinton were joined by Her Majesty Queen Noor and the U.S. First Lady Hillary Clinton for another half an hour.

King Hussein and Queen Noor voiced appreciation for Mr. and Mrs. Clinton for their hospitality and concern during the King's six months of treatment at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota.

Mr. and Mrs. Clinton congratulated the King on his

recovery and reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to further bolster ties of cooperation with Jordan.

The meeting was attended by senior U.S. State Department officials and on the Jordanian side by General Intelligence Department Director Samih Bantaki and Ambassador Muasher.

On the other hand, King Hussein visited the State Department where he discussed with Albright the

recent developments in the Middle East and obstacles facing the implementation of the Wye River agreement.

"The two sides also discussed international and regional issues of mutual concern," Muasher said.

King Hussein's meeting with President Clinton and Albright comes ahead of the King's departure today to London where he is due to spend several days before coming back home.

Bill Gates pie throwers fined

BRUSSELS (R) — Two people who threw custard pies at Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates in Brussels last February have been fined by a Belgian court. The two, who were not identified, were fined by the Police Court on Monday, a spokeswoman for the Public Prosecutor's Office said on Tuesday. She said she could not detail the amount of the fines, Belgian newspaper La Dernière Heure reported that the two pie throwers had each received fines of \$87.72. Gates was visiting Brussels following a meeting with world aid business leaders in Switzerland when the attack occurred.

Scandal erupts over priest's marriage

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — A scandal has erupted in the northern province of Misiones after a local priest eloped with a former Catholic school teacher, a newspaper reported here Tuesday. Filipino priest Josefine Krusillo of the Divine Word Church and Laura Krupp, former vice-director of the Saint Francis of Assisi Institute were secretly married Dec. 18, the local paper said. The couple is currently honeymooning in the Philippines. El Territorio said, "Even though I understand and cannot pass judgement, it is a lamentable act, because it harms the community and the (church) official," Posadas Bishop Joaquin Pina told the paper.

Singer faces jail for mafia sex blackmail link

ISTANBUL (AFP) — One of Turkey's most popular singers faces up to 12 and a half years in jail for setting the mafia on a male model who was blackmailing her with sex video, the Turkish press reported Tuesday. Sibel Can, a female singer and show star, is to be charged with wrongful deprivation of personal liberty and links with organized crime in an Istanbul State Security Court, the papers said. Can, 30, her husband Haluk Ural, was accused of sending a gang after the model Can Kuzu, who was allegedly threatening to publish a video tape showing the singer having sex with a Turkish beauty king.

Two mice tale a nightmare for local franchiser

NEW YORK (R) — The tale of two mice that celebrated their holidays in a New York doughnut store and got national media coverage has turned into a nightmare for a local franchiser who was sued by Dunkin' Donuts. The suit, filed in Manhattan federal court, seeks a court order to enforce a termination notice sent to the franchiser on New Year's Eve. The suit seeks unspecified damages and an order to force the franchiser to stop using Dunkin' Donuts trademarks. The story began on Dec. 30 when the New York Post reported it saw a mouse munching on doughnuts from the racks of a Dunkin' Donuts shop on Fifth Avenue.

MacDonald's apologises for running out of Big Mac

LONDON (R) — McDonald's Corp apologised for running out of its famous Big Mac hamburgers after British fast-food lovers sent their teeth into a two-for-one promotion. "We expected the current 25th anniversary Big Mac offer to be popular, but the world's largest restaurant chain said in full-page ads in several British tabloids. "However, the unprecedented demand has resulted in stock shortages in some of our restaurants, for which we sincerely apologise." Tabloids carried front-page reports of furious customers left empty-handed, with one descending on McDonald's restaurants in droves.

Turk ministry bans broad virginity test

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's Ministry of Health has banned the practice of virginity testing, a controversial tradition in some parts of the country. The ministry said in a statement that the practice, which involves a medical examination to determine if a woman is a virgin, is not a scientific method and can cause physical and psychological harm. The ban applies to all health facilities in Turkey.

House plunges Swiss red light district into darkness

BERNE (R) — A fire in a building in Zurich's red light district has plunged the area into darkness. The fire, which broke out in a building housing several sex workers, forced them to flee. The fire department is working to contain the blaze, and the area is currently cordoned off.

Swiss mountains

CHAM (R) — A fire in a mountain cabin in the Swiss Alps has caused significant damage. The fire, which started in a kitchen, spread to the rest of the cabin. The fire department is working to contain the blaze, and the area is currently cordoned off.

Egyptian singer arrested over gambling charges

CAIRO (R) — An Egyptian singer has been arrested on charges of gambling. The singer, who was found at a gambling den, is being held by the police. The charges are related to a long-standing ban on gambling in Egypt.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Clinton trial to open Thursday

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton's impeachment trial on charges stemming from the Monica Lewinsky affair will open Jan. 7. Republican Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott said Tuesday. But while ready to swear to be impartial jurors in the second presidential trial in U.S. history, senators were still clashing over the historical proceeding's scope and duration. Lott said he had discussed the proceedings earlier in the day with Democratic Minority Leader Thomas Daschle and with U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist, who will preside over the trial.

Iran intelligence agents murdered dissidents

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian intelligence officers carried out the recent killings of dissident intellectuals and politicians in Tehran, the intelligence ministry said in a statement Tuesday. "Irresponsible colleagues" who were "acting on their own" were responsible for the killings, the ministry said, quoted by the official IRNA news agency. It severely condemned the murders, which it said had been carried out by a network of agents working on behalf of foreign interests. "The ministry has succeeded in identifying the network and arresting its members," it said. Two secular writers, Mohammad Mokhtari and Mohammad Pouyandeh, were kidnapped and murdered in early December. They were reportedly found strangled.

Yemeni socialist assassinated

ADEN (AFP) — The Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) representative in the southern Dahla province was assassinated on New Year's Eve by unknown assailants, the Al Tariq weekly reported Tuesday. Ahmad Mossad Amman was killed as he was leaving the mosque of the village of Dimth, said the weekly, which is published in the southern city of Aden. An inquiry has been opened.

Copt man killed for dating Muslim woman

SOHAG (AFP) — A Coptic Christian man who reportedly secretly dated a Muslim woman was shot to death in southern Egypt, triggering a wave of protests at his funeral Tuesday, judicial officials and witnesses said. "We will seek revenge. We will fight Muslims," mourners at the funeral of Magdi Fawzi Massud, 30, chanted in the village of Ruwayheb in the central province of Sohag, witnesses said. But village elders quickly stepped in and restored calm to the funeral procession, the witnesses said.

Sudan to require Islamic attire for women

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan has imposed a new dress code on women requiring them to wear Islamic attire and a headscarf and will deploy public order police to ensure that it is observed, the official news agency SUNA said on Tuesday. It said the decision was taken by the Public Order and Appearance Committee, set up to ensure behaviour conforms with Islamic law which took effect in Sudan in 1991.

8 Palestinians killed in Saudi bus crash

RIYADH (AFP) — Eight Palestinians were killed and 10 others injured as their bus caught fire in a road crash near the Saudi port city of Jeddah, a newspaper said Tuesday. Al Bilad said the bus collided with the trailer of a truck on the road from Jeddah to the Muslim holy city of Medina on Monday. The wounded were taken to hospital in Medina.

Syrians to get e-mail access this month

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syrians will have access to e-mail beginning this month, the government newspaper Tishrin said Tuesday. "The electronic mail service will be accessible to all who have telephones to be followed by the availability of other Internet services in the next few months," the paper said. Syria opened an Internet site in March 1997 but the World Wide Web is not yet accessible to the general public.

New ministers in Cyprus sworn in

NICOSIA (AFP) — Cyprus's new defence and education ministers were sworn in Tuesday in Nicosia, replacing those who resigned over the president's decision not to deploy controversial missiles on this Mediterranean island, the official CNA news agency said. Yiannakis Chrysostomides, a member of the country's supreme court, replaced Yiannakis Omirou as defence minister. Omirou's resignation, first vice president of the ruling Democratic Rally (DISY) party, took over the education and culture ministry from Lykourgos Kappas.

Aziz receives Shbeilat

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz met prominent Jordanian opposition figure Leith Shbeilat in Baghdad on Tuesday, the official INA news agency said.

Shbeilat was in Iraq "to express his support for the Iraqi people in the face of the U.S. and British aggression," INA said.

A former president of Jordan's engineers association and a pro-Iraqi Islamist leader, Shbeilat was arrested Feb. 19 in the southern town of Ma'an during a standoff between Iraq and the United Nations over weapons inspections.

Pro-Iraqi riots broke out the following day in the Jordanian town during which one man died from a bullet fired by a demonstrator and more than 20 others were wounded.

Shbeilat was sentenced on May 12 to nine months in prison for "inciting the people to demonstrate illegally which resulted in crimes."

His Majesty King Hussein pardoned Shbeilat later in May but the opposition figure refused to accept the pardon, preferring to stay in prison.

U.S. fighters fire on Iraqi planes

(Continued from page 1)

Bacon said there were reports that a MiG crashed because it ran out of gas. "We believe that to be the case but we do not have certainty on that right now," he said.

Prior to Tuesday, there had been two incidents in the no-fly zones — neither involving air-to-air combat — since the U.S. and British airstrikes of Dec. 16-19.

On Dec. 28, U.S. warplanes fired on an Iraqi surface-to-air missile battery in the northern zone after being fired on from the ground. Iraq said four Iraqi soldiers were killed and seven wounded.

On Dec. 30, U.S. warplanes hit an anti-aircraft battery in the south. Iraq says a farmer was killed and two other civilians wounded.

Saddam announced earlier in a statement read on state-run Iraq television that the no-fly zones imposed on his country

have no basis in international law and vowed that Iraq will fight violations of its airspace "with all its courage and bravery."

Iraq's air force has more than 300 warplanes, but only about 55 per cent are properly serviced because of sanctions in force since the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

In an address Tuesday, Saddam Hussein urged Arabs to stand behind Iraq and to rise up against Arab leaders who are allies of the United States and Britain.

"Revolt, sons of the great Arab Nation ... revolt and unseat those stooges, collaborators, throne dwarfs and cowards," Saddam said in a speech broadcast on one of the most popular satellite channels in the Arab World.

The broadcast came shortly after the clash between U.S. and Iraqi

planes in the south.

Saddam did not mention the incident in the southern "no-fly" zone in his speech, which was carried by Qatar's Al Jazeera Television. An English-language text was made available in Baghdad.

It was unclear if the speech — expected to be broadcast in Iraq on Wednesday, which is Army Day — was recorded before or after the incident.

On the ground, Iraq has launched a campaign to replace U.S. and British nationals with the U.N. humanitarian programme, focusing on staff working in the provinces.

"It's people who are outside of Baghdad," who are the main targets, said George Somerville, spokesman for the humanitarian programme.

"The north is not a particular target but a number of people who are of concern to the Iraqi government are based in the

north," which is controlled by Kurdish factions in defiance of Baghdad, he told AFP.

Among the Americans and Britons, Somerville said two senior U.N. officials based in Baghdad were not affected along with a secretary to a senior staff member.

On Monday, the Iraqi government formally requested the replacement of U.S. and British humanitarian workers in Iraq following last month's air strikes.

In an aide-memoire transmitted to the U.N. Security Council, the authorities warned that "Iraq cannot guarantee the safety of personnel of these two nationalities."

Western diplomats in New York said that a total 14 British and U.S. nationals had been informed that Iraq wanted their replacement.

The entry visas of 10 — nine Britons and one U.S. national — would not be renewed, while four other

Britons working for U.N. contractors would be told to leave Iraq on completing their assignment.

Some 500 international U.N. staff implement an "oil-for-food" deal which enables Iraq to export fixed quantities of crude in return for badly-needed food and medicine.

Playing down Iraq's request, U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin said an Iraqi official had verbally informed the United Nations that no U.N. workers would be expelled.

He had also given an assurance that the denial of entry visas was "a temporary measure." But Rubin said any Iraqi effort to selectively exclude some nationalities from the U.N. programme "would contravene the U.N.'s worldwide policy of non-discrimination on the basis of nationality."